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# NOTES

## THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD.

BY

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

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## PRELIMINARY ESSAY.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *ON THE NAMES OF THE MIRACLES.*

EVERY discussion about a thing will best proceed from an investigation of the name or names which it bears; for the name seizes and presents the most distinctive features of the thing, embodying them for us in a word. In the name we have the true declaration of the innermost nature of the thing; we have a witness to that which the universal sense of men, finding its utterance in language, has ever felt thus to lie at its heart; and if we would learn to know the thing, we must start with seeking accurately to know the name which it bears. In the discussion upon which now we are entering, there is not one name only, but many, to consider; for it is a consequence of that which just has been said, that where we have to do with aught which in many ways is significant, the names also will inevitably be many, since no one will exhaust all its meaning. Each of these will embody a portion of its essential qualities, will present it upon a single side; and not from the contemplation exclusively of any one, but only of all of these together, will any adequate conception of that which we desire to understand be obtained. Thus what we commonly call miracles, are in the sacred Scriptures termed sometimes "wonders," sometimes "signs," sometimes "powers," sometimes simply "works." These titles they continually bear, in addition to some others, which are of rarer occurrence and will easily range themselves under one or other of these;—on each of which I would fain say a few words, before attempting to make any further advance in the subject.

I: To begin then with the name “*wonder*,”\* in which the effect of astonishment, which the work produces upon the beholders, is transferred to the work itself, an effect often graphically portrayed by the Evangelists when relating our Lord’s miracles (Mark ii. 12; iv. 41; vi. 51; vii. 37. cf. Acts iii. 10, 11), it will at once be felt that this does but touch the outside of the matter. The ethical meaning of the miracle would be wholly lost, were blank astonishment or mere wonder all which it aroused; since the same effect might be produced by a thousand meaner causes. Indeed it is not a little remarkable, rather is it profoundly characteristic of the miracles of the N. T., as Origen noted long ago,† that this name “wonders” is never applied to them but in connexion with some other name. They are continually “signs *and* wonders” (Acts xiv. 3; Rom. xv. 19; Matt. xxiv. 24; Heb. ii. 4); or “signs” alone (John ii. 11; Acts viii. 6; Rev. xiii. 13); or “powers” alone (Mark vi. 14; Acts xix. 11); but never “wonders” alone.‡ Not that the miracle, considered simply as a wonder, as an astonishing event which the beholders can reduce to no law with which they are acquainted, is even as such without its meaning and its purpose; that purpose being forcibly to startle men from the dull dream of a sense-bound

\* Τέρας. The term *θαῦμα*, near akin to *τέρας*, and one of the commonest in the Greek Fathers to designate the miracles, never occurs in Scripture; *θαυμάσιον* only once (Matt. xxi. 15); but the *θαυμάζειν* is often brought out as a consequence (Matt. viii. 27; ix. 8, 33; xv. 31, &c.). Παράδοξον, which in like manner expresses the *unexpectedness* of the wonder, and so implies, though it does not express, the astonishment which it causes,—a word of frequent usage in ecclesiastical Greek,—is found only Luke v. 26.

† In Joh. tom. xiii. § 6.

‡ It is not satisfactory that a word, thus only the subordinate one in the Greek, should be the chief one in our language to designate these divine facts,—that the two words almost exclusively in use among us, namely *wonders* and *miracles*, should bring out only the accidental accompaniment, the *astonishment* which the work creates, and should go so little into the deeper meaning of the work itself. The Latin *miraculum* (not properly a substantive, but the neuter of *miraculus*) and the German *Wunder* lie under exactly the same defect.

existence; and, however it may not be itself an appeal to the spiritual in man, yet to act as a summons to him that he now open his eyes to the spiritual appeal which is about to be addrest to him (Acts xiv. 8-18).

2. But the miracle, besides being a “wonder,” is also a “sign,”\* a token and indication of the near presence and working of God. In this word the ethical end and purpose of the miracle comes out the *most* prominently, as in “wonder” the least. They are *signs* and pledges of something more than and beyond themselves (Isai. vii. 11; xxxviii. 7†); valuable, not

\* Σημεῖον. That defect, unfortunately so frequent in our English Version, namely, that it does not seek, so far as this is possible, to render one word of the original always by one and the same word in English, but varies its renderings capriciously and without necessity, is noticeable here. There is no reason why σημεῖον should not always have been rendered “sign;” but in the Gospel of St. John, with whom the word is an especial favourite far oftener than not, “sign” gives place to the vaguer “miracle,” and this sometimes notwithstanding injury to the force and entire clearness of the words; thus see iii. 2; vii. 31; x. 41; and especially vi. 26, where the substitution of “miracles” for “signs” is particularly unfortunate. Our Version makes Christ to say to the multitude, which, after He had once fed them in the wilderness, gathered round Him again, “Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the *miracles*,” &c. It should rather be, “Ye seek Me, not because ye saw *signs*” (*σημεῖα* without the article), “not because ye recognized in those works of mine *tokens* and *intimations* of a higher presence, such as led you to conceive great thoughts of Me: they are no such glimpses of my higher nature which bring you here; but you come that you may again be filled.” The coming merely because they had seen *miracles*, in the sense of works that had made them marvel, and hoped to see such again, would have been as much condemned by our Lord as the coming only for the satisfying of their lowest earthly wants (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 1-4).

† Basil (*in Ioe.*): “Ἐστι σημεῖον πρᾶγμα φανερὸν, κεκρυμμένον τιὸς καὶ ἀφανοῦς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν δῆλωσιν ἔχον” (Suicer, *Thes.* s. v.). And Lampe is good here (*Comm. in Joh.* vol. i. p. 513): Designat sane σημεῖον naturā suā rem non tantum extraordinariam, sensusque percellentem, sed etiam talem, quæ in rei alterius, absentis licet et futurae significationem atque adumbrationem adhibetur, unde et prognostica (Matt. xvi. 3) et typi (Matt. xii. 39; Luc. xi. 29), nec non sacramenta, quale est illud circumcisioonis (Rom. iv. 11), codem nomine in N. T. exprimi solent. Aptissime ergo haec vox de miraculis usurpatur, ut indicet,

so much for what they are, as for what they indicate of the grace and power of the doer, or of the connexion in which he stands with a higher world. Oftentimes they are thus seals of power set to the person who accomplishes them ("the Lord confirming the word by *signs* following," Mark xvi. 20; Acts xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 4); legitimating acts, by which he claims to be attended to as a messenger from God.\* We find the word continually used in senses such as these. Thus, "What *sign* shovest thou" (John ii. 18)? was the question which the Jews asked, when they wanted the Lord to justify the things which He was doing, by showing that He had especial authority to do them. Again they say, "We would see a *sign* from Thee" (Matt. xii. 38); "Show us a *sign* from heaven" (Matt. xvi. 1). St. Paul speaks of himself as having "the *signs* of an apostle" (2 Cor. xii. 12), in other words, the tokens which should mark him out as such. Thus, too, in the O. T., when God sends Moses to deliver Israel He furnishes him with two "signs." He warns him that Pharaoh will require him to legitimate his mission, to produce his credentials that he is indeed God's ambassador, and equips him with the powers which shall justify him as such, which, in other words, shall be his "signs"

quod non tantum admirabili modo fuerint perpetrata, sed etiam sapientissimo consilio Dei ita directa atque ordinata, ut fuerint simul *characteres* Messiae, ex quibus cognoscendus erat, *sigilla* doctrinæ quam proferebat, et beneficiorum gratiæ per Messiam jam præstandæ, nec non *typi* viarum Dei, earumque circumstantiarum per quas talia beneficia erant applicanda.

\* The Latin *monstrum*, whether we derive it with Cicero (*De Divin.* i. 42) from *monstro*, or with Festus from *moneo* (*monstrum, velut monestrum, quod monet futurum*), though commonly used as answering most nearly to τέρας (Nec dubiis ea signa dedit Tritonia *monstris*, *Æn.* ii. 171), is in truth by either etymology more nearly related to σημεῖον. Thus Augustine, who follows Cicero's derivation (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 8): *Monstra* sane dicta perhibent a *monstrando*, quod aliquid significando demonstrant, et ostenta ab ostendendo, et portenta a portendendo, id est præostendendo, et prodigia quod porro dicant, id est futura prædicant. And *In Ev. Joh.* tract. vi.: *Prodigium appellatum est quasi porrodictum, quod porro dicat, porro significet, et aliiquid futurum esse portendat.* See Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. ii. p. 1139.

(Exod. vii. 9, 10). He “gave a sign” to the prophet, whom He sent to protest against the will-worship of Jeroboam (1 Kin. xiii. 3).\*

At the same time it may be convenient here to observe that the “sign” is not of necessity a miracle, although only as such it has a place in our discussion. Many a common matter may be a “sign” or seal set to the truth of some word, the announcement of which goes along with it; so that when that “sign” comes true, it may be accepted as a pledge that the greater matter, which was, as it were, bound up with it, shall also come true in its time. Thus the Angels give to the shepherds for “a sign” their finding of the Child wrapt in swaddling clothes in a manger (Luke ii. 12. cf. Exod. iii. 12).† Samuel gives to Saul three “signs” that God has indeed appointed him king over Israel, and only the last of these is linked with aught supernatural (1 Sam. x. 1-9). The prophet gave Eli the death of his two sons as a “sign” that his threatening word should come true (1 Sam. ii. 34. cf. Jer. xliv. 29, 38). God gave to Gideon a “sign” in the camp of the Midianites of the victory which he should win (Judg. vii. 9-15), though it does not happen that the word occurs in that narration‡ (cf. 2 Kin. vii. 2, 17-20).

\* As is natural, the word sometimes loses its special and higher signification, and is used simply as = *τέρας*. Thus St. Luke (xxiii. 8) says of Herod, that he hoped to have seen some “sign” (*σημεῖον*) wrought by Christ. The last thing he would have desired would have been a sign or indication of a present God; but what he wanted was some glaring feat which should have set him agape—a *τέρας*,—or, more properly yet, a *θαῦμα*, in the lowest and meanest sense of the word.

† Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* viii. 42-45, 81-83.

‡ The words *τέρας* and *σημεῖον* stand linked together, not merely in the New T. (Acts ii. 22; iv. 30; 2 Cor. xii. 12; John iv. 48), but frequently in the Old (Exod. vii. 3, 9; xi. 9; Deut. iv. 34; vi. 22, and often; Neh. ix. 10; Isai. viii. 18; xx. 3; Dan. iv. 2; vi. 27; Ps. lxxxvii. 43; civ. 27; cxxxiv. 9, LXX); and no less in profane Greek (Polybius, iii. 112, 8; *Aelian.*, V. II. xii. 57; *Orph. Argon.* xxvii.; Josephus, *Antiqq.* xx. 8, 6; Plutarch, *Sept. Sap. Conv.* iii.). The distinction between the two, as though the *τέρας* were the *more* wonderful, the *σημεῖον* the *less* so,—

Or it is possible for a man, under a strong conviction that the hand of God is leading him, to set such or such a contingent event as a “sign” to himself, the falling-out of which in this way or in that he will accept as an intimation from God of what He would have him to do. Examples of this also are not uncommon in Scripture (Gen. xxiv. 14-21; Judg. vi. 36-40; 1 Sam. xiv. 8-13). Very curious; and standing by themselves, are the signs which shall only come to pass, *after* that of which they were the signs has actually befallen; but which shall still serve to confirm it, as having been wrought directly of God. We have examples of this, Exod. iii. 12; 2 Kin. xix. 29.

3. Frequently also the miracles are styled “*powers*” or “*mighty works*,” that is, of God.\* As in the term “wonder” or “miracle,” the effect is transferred and gives a name to the cause, so here the cause gives its name to the effect.†

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as though it would be a *σημεῖον* to heal the sick, a *τέρας* to open the blind eyes, or to raise the dead (so Ammonius, *Cat. in Joh.* iv. 48: *τέρας ἐστὶ τὸ παρὰ φύσιν, οἷον τὸ ἀνοῖξαι ὁφθαλμοὺς τυφλῶν καὶ ἐγέρναι νεκρόν· σημεῖον δὲ τὸ οὐκ ἔξω τῆς φύσεως, οἷον ἐστὶν ὑάγισθαι ἄρρωστον*), is quite untenable, however frequent among some of the Greek Fathers (see Suicer, *Thes. s. v. σημεῖον*). Neither will Origen’s distinction stand (*in Rom. xv. 19*): *Signa* appellantur, in quibus cum sit aliquid mirabile, indicatur quoque aliquid futurum. *Prodigia* vero in quibus tantummodo aliud mirabile ostenditur. Rather the same miracle is upon one side a *τέρας*, on another a *σημεῖον*; and the words most often refer not to different classes of miracles, but to different qualities in the same miracles; so Fritzsche: Eandem rem diverse estimatam exprimunt; and Lampe (*Comm. in Joh.* vol. i. p. 513): Eadem miracula dici possunt *signa*, quatenus aliquid seu occultum seu futurum docent; et *prodigia* (*τέρατα*), quatenus aliquid extraordinarium, quod stuporem excitat, sistunt. Hinc sequitur *signorum* notionem latius patere, quam *prodigiorum*. Omnia prodigia sunt *signa*, quia in illum usum a Deo dispensata, ut arcuum indicent. Sed omnia signa non sunt *prodigia*, quia ad signandum res cœlestes aliquando etiam res communes adhibentur. Cf. 2 Chron. xxxii. 24, 31; where at ver. 24 that is called a *σημεῖον*, which at ver. 31 is a *τέρας* (LXX).

\* *Δυνάμεις* = virtutes.

† With this *ἔξονσία* is related, which yet only once occurs to designate a miracle. They are termed *ἐνδοξα* (Luke xiii. 17), as being

The “*power*” dwells originally in the divine Messenger (Acts vi. 8; x. 38; Rom. xv. 19); is one with which he is himself equipped of God. Christ is thus in the highest sense that which Simon blasphemously suffered himself to be named, “The great *Power of God*” (Acts viii. 10). But then, by an easy transition, the word comes to signify the exertions and separate puttings forth of this power. These are “powers” in the plural, although the same word is now translated in our Version, “wonderful works” (Matt. vii. 22), and now, “mighty works” (Matt. xi. 20; Mark vi. 14; Luke x. 13), and still more frequently, “miracles” (Acts ii. 22; xix. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28; Gal. iii. 5); in this last case giving sometimes such tautologies as this, “miracles *and* wonders” (Acts ii. 22; Heb. ii. 4); and always causing to be lost something of the express force of the word,—namely, that it points to new *powers* which have entered, and are working in, this world of ours.

These three terms, of which we have hitherto sought to unfold the meaning, occur thrice in connexion with one another (Acts ii. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 9), although each time in a different order. They are all, as has already been noted in the case of two of them, rather descriptive of different sides of the same works, than themselves different classes of works.\* An example of one of our Lord’s miracles

works in which the δόξα of God came eminently out (see John ii. 11; xi. 40), and which in return caused men to *glorify* Him (Mark ii. 12). They are μεγαλεῖα = magnalia (Luke i. 49), as outcomings of the greatness of God’s power.

\* Pelt’s definition (*Comm. in Thess.* p. 179) is brief and good: *Parum différunt tria ista δυνάμεις, σημεῖα, τέρατα.* Δύναμις numero singulari tamen est vis miraculorum edendorum; σημεῖα quatenus comprobantē inserviunt doctrinae sive missioni divinæ; τέρατα portenta sunt, quæ admirationem et stuporem excitant. Cf. Calvin on 2 Cor. xii. 12: Signa porro vocantur, quod non sunt inania spectacula, sed quæ destinata sunt docendis hominibus. Prodigia, quod suā novitate expergesfacere homines debent, et percillere. Potentiae aut virtutes, quod sunt magis insignia specimina divinæ potentiae, quam quæ cernimus in ordinario naturæ cursu.

may show how it may at once be all these. Thus the healing of the paralytic (Mark ii. 1-12) was a *wonder*, for they who beheld it "were all *amazed*;" it was a *power*, for the man at Christ's word "arose, took up his bed, and went out before them all;" it was a *sign*, for it gave token that One greater than men deemed was among them; it stood in connexion with a higher fact of which it was the sign and seal (cf. 1 Kin. xiii. 3; 2 Kin. i. 10), being wrought that they might "know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins."\*

4. A further term by which St. John very frequently names the miracles is eminently significant. They are continually with him simply "*works*"† (v. 36; vii. 21; x. 25, 32, 38; xiv. 11, 12; xv. 24. cf. Matt. xi. 2); as though the wonderful were only the natural form of working for Him who is dwelt in by all the fulness of God; He must, out of the necessity of his higher being, bring forth these works greater than man's. They are the periphery of that circle whereof He is the centre. The great miracle is the Incarnation; all else, so to speak, follows naturally and of course. It is no wonder that He whose name is "Wonderful" (Isai. ix. 6) does *works of wonder*; the only wonder would be if He did them not.‡ The sun in the heavens is itself a wonder; but it is

\* With regard to the verbs connected with these nouns, we may observe in the three first Evangelists, *σημεῖα διδόναι* (Matt. xii. 39; xxiv. 24; Mark viii. 12), and still more frequently *δυνάμεις ποιεῖν* (Matt. vii. 22; xiii. 58; Mark ix. 39, &c.). Neither of these phrases occurs in St. John, but *σημεῖα ποιεῖν* continually (i. 11; iii. 2; iv. 54; &c.), which is altogether wanting in the earlier Evangelists; occurring, however, in the Acts (vii. 36; xv. 12) and in Revelations (xiii. 13; xix. 20). Once St. John has *σημεῖα δεικνύειν* (ii. 18).

† The miracles of the O. T. are called *ἔργα*, Heb. iii. 9; Ps. xciv. 9, LXX.

‡ Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xvii.*): *Mirum non esse debet a Deo factum miraculum. . . . Magis gaudere et admirari debemus quia Dominus noster et Salvator Jesus Christus homo factus est, quam quod divina inter homines Deus fecit.*

not a wonder that, being what it is, it rays forth its effluences of light and heat. These miracles are the fruit after its kind which the divine tree brings forth; and may, with a deep truth, be styled the “works”\* of Christ, with no further addition or explanation.

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\* I am aware that this interpretation of *ἔργα*, as used by St. John, has sometimes been called in question, and that by this word has been understood the sum total of his acts and his teachings, his words and his works, as they came under the eyes of men; not indeed excluding the miracles, but including also very much besides; yet I cannot doubt that our Lord, using this word, means his miracles, and only them. The one passage brought with any apparent force against this meaning (John xvii. 4) does not really belong to the question. For that *ἔργον* in the singular may, and here does, signify his whole work and task, is beyond all doubt; but that in the plural the word means his miracles, the following passages, v. 36; x. 25, 32, 38; xiv. 11, to which others might be added, seem to me decisively to prove.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MIRACLES AND NATURE.

WHEREIN, it may be asked, does the miracle differ from any event in the ordinary course of nature? For that too is wonderful; the fact that it is a marvel of continual recurrence may rob it, subjectively, of our admiration; we may be content to look at it with a dull incurious eye, and to think we find in its constant repetition the explanation of its law, even as we often find in this a reason for excusing ourselves altogether from wonder and reverent admiration;\* yet it does not remain the less a marvel still.

To this question some have replied, that since all is thus marvellous, since the grass growing, the seed springing, the sun rising, are as much the result of powers which we cannot trace or measure, as the water turned into wine, or the sick healed by a word, or the blind restored to vision by a touch, there is therefore no such thing as a miracle, eminently so called. We have no right, they say, in the mighty and complex miracle of nature which encircles us on every side, to separate off in an arbitrary manner some certain facts, and to say that this and that are wonders, and all the rest ordinary processes of nature; but rather we must confine ourselves to one language or the other, and entitle all miracle, or nothing.

But this, however at first sight it may seem very deep and true, is indeed most shallow and fallacious. There is quite enough in itself and in its purposes to distinguish that which we call by this name, from all with which it is thus attempted to be confounded, and in which to be lost. The

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\* See Augustine, *De Gen. ad Lit.* xii. 18; *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 8, 3; and Gregory the Great (*Hom. xxvi. in Evang.*): Quotidiana Dei miracula ex assiduitate viluerunt. Cf. Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* ii. 38.

distinction indeed which is sometimes made, that in the miracle God is immediately working, and in other events is leaving it to the laws which He has established to work, cannot at all be admitted: for it has its root in a dead mechanical view of the universe, altogether remote from the truth. The clock-maker makes his clock, and leaves it; the ship-builder builds and launches his ship, and others navigate it; the world, however, is no curious piece of mechanism which its Maker constructs, and then dismisses from his hands, only from time to time reviewing and repairing it; but, as our Lord says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17); He "upholdeth all things by the word of his power"\*(Heb. i. 3). And to speak of "laws of God," "laws of nature," may become to us a language altogether deceptive, and hiding the deeper reality from our eyes. *Laws* of God exist only for us. It is a *will* of God for Himself.† That will indeed, being the will of highest wisdom and love, excludes all wilfulness; it is a will upon which we can securely count; from the past expressions of it we can presume its future, and so we rightfully call it a law. But still from moment to moment it is a will; each law, as we term it, of nature is only that which we have learned concerning this will in that particular region of its activity. To say then that there is more of the will of God in a miracle than in any other work of his, is insufficient. Such an assertion grows

\* Augustine: Sunt qui arbitrantur tantummodo mundum ipsum factum a Deo; eetera jam fieri ab ipso mundo, sicut ille ordinavit et jussit. Deum autem ipsum nihil operari. Contra quos profertur illa sententia Domini, Pater meus usque adhuc operatur, et ego operor. . . . Neque enim, sicut a structurâ aedium, cum fabricaverit quis, abscedit; atque illo cessante et absente stat opus ejus; ita mundus vel ictu oculi stare poterit, si ei Deus regimen suum subtraxerit. So Melanthon (*In loc. de C'reatione*): Infirmitas humana etiam si cogitat Deum esse conditorem, tamen postea imaginatur, ut faber discedit a navi exstructâ et relinquat eam nautis; ita Deum discedere a suo opere, et relinquere creaturas tantum propriæ gubernationi; haec imaginatio magnam caliginem offundit animis et parit dubitationes.

† Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 8): Dei voluntas natura rerum est.

out of that lifeless scheme of the world, whereof we should ever be seeking to rid ourselves, but which such a theory will only help to confirm and to uphold.

For while we deny the conclusion, that since all is wonder, therefore the miracle commonly so called is in no other way than the ordinary processes of nature, the manifestation of the presence and power of God, we must not with this deny the truth which lies in this statement. All is wonder; to make a man is at least as great a marvel as to raise a man from the dead. The seed that multiplies in the furrow is as marvellous as the bread that multiplied in Christ's hands. The miracle is not a *greater* manifestation of God's power than those ordinary and ever-repeated processes; but it is a *different\** manifestation. By those other God is speaking at all times and to all the world; they are a vast unbroken revelation of Him. "The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). Yet from the very circumstance that nature is thus speaking evermore to all, that this speaking is diffused over all time, addressed unto all men, that its sound is gone out into all lands, from the very constancy and universality of this language, it may miss its aim. It cannot be said to stand in nearer relation to one man than to another, to confirm one man's word more than that of others, to address one man's conscience more than that of every other man. However it may sometimes have, it must often lack, a peculiar and personal significance. But in the miracle, wrought in the sight of some certain men, and claiming their special attention, there is a speaking to them in particular. There is then a voice in nature which

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\* Augustine (*Serm. cclii. 1*): In homine carnali tota regula intellegendi est consuetudo cernendi. Quod solent videre credunt: quod non solent, non credunt. . . . Majora quidem miracula sunt, tot quotidie homines nasci qui non erant, quam paucos resurrexisse qui erant; et tamen ista miracula non consideratione comprehensa sunt, sed assiduitate viluerunt. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moral. vi. 15*.

addresses itself directly to them, a singling of them out from the crowd. It is plain that God has now a peculiar word which they are to give heed to, a message to which He is bidding them to listen.\*

An extraordinary divine causality, and not that ordinary which we acknowledge every where and in every thing, belongs, then, to the essence of the miracle; powers of God other than those which have always been working; such, indeed, as most seldom or never have been working before. The unresting activity of God, which at other times hides and conceals itself behind the veil of what we term natural laws, does in the miracle unveil itself; it steps out from its concealment, and the hand which works is laid bare. Beside and beyond† the ordinary operations of nature, higher powers (higher, not as coming from a higher source, but as bearing upon higher ends) intrude and make themselves felt even at the very springs and sources of her power.

Yet when we say that it is of the very essence of the miracle that it should be thus "a new thing," it is not with this denied that the natural itself may become miraculous *to us* by the way in which it is timed, by the ends which it

\* All this is brought out in a very instructive discussion on the miracle, which finds place in Augustine's great dogmatic work, *De Trinit.* iii. 5, and extends to the chapters upon either side, being the largest statement of his views upon the subject which anywhere finds place in his works: Quis attrahit humorem per radicem vitis ad botrum et vinum facit, nisi Deus, qui et homine plantante et rigante incrementum dat? Sed cum ad nutum Domini aqua in vinum inusitatâ celestitate conversa est, etiam stultis fatentibus, vis divina declarata est. Quis arbusta fronde et flore vestit solemniter, nisi Deus? Verum cum floruit virga sacerdotis Aaron, colleuta est quodam modo eum dubitante humanitate divinitas. . . . . Cum fiant illa continuato quasi quodam fluvio labentium manantiumque rerum, et ex occulto in promptum, atque ex prompto in occultum, usitato itinere transeuntium, naturalia dicuntur: cum vero admonendis hominibus inusitatâ mutabilitate ingeruntur, magnalia nominantur.

† Not, as we shall see the greatest theologians have always earnestly contended, *contra* naturam, but *præter* naturam and *supra* naturam.

is made to serve. It is indeed true that aught which is perfectly explicable from the course of nature and history, is assuredly no miracle in the most proper sense of the word. Yet still the finger of God may be so plainly discernible in it, there may be in it so remarkable a convergence of many unconnected causes to a single end, it may so meet a crisis in the lives of men, or in the onward march<sup>r</sup> of the kingdom of God, may stand in such noticeable relation with God's great work of redemption, that even while it is plainly deducible from natural causes, while there were such, perfectly adequate to produce the effects, we yet may be entirely justified in terming it a miracle, a *providential*, although not an absolute, miracle. Absolute it cannot be called, since there were known causes perfectly capable of bringing it about, and, these existing, it would be superstition to betake ourselves to others, or to seek to disconnect it from these. Yet the natural may in a manner lift itself up into the miraculous, by the moment at which it falls out, by the purposes which it is made to fulfil. It is a subjective wonder, a wonder *for us*, though not an objective, not a wonder in itself.

Thus many of the plagues of Egypt were the natural plagues of the land,\*—these, it is true, raised and quickened into far direr than their usual activity. In itself it was nothing miraculous that grievous swarms of flies should infest the houses of the Egyptians, or that flights of locusts should spoil their fields, or that a murrain should destroy their cattle. None of these visitations were or are unknown in that land; but the intensity of *all* these plagues, the manner in which they followed in dread succession on one another, their connexion with the word of Moses which went before, with Pharaoh's trial which was proceeding, with Israel's deliverance which they helped onward, the order of their coming and going, all these do entirely justify us in calling them “the signs and wonders of Egypt,” even as such is the scrip-

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\* See Hengstenberg, *Die Bücher Moses und Agypten*, pp. 93-129.

tural language about them (Ps. lxxviii. 43; Acts vii. 36). It is no absolute miracle to find a coin in a fish's mouth (Matt. xvii. 27), or that a lion should meet a man and slay him (1 Kin. xiii. 24), or that a thunderstorm should happen at an unusual period of the year (1 Sam. xii. 16-19); and yet these circumstances may be so timed for strengthening faith, for punishing disobedience, for awakening repentance, they may serve such high purposes in God's moral government, that we at once range them in the catalogue of miracles, without seeking to make an anxious discrimination between the miracle absolute and providential.\* Especially have they a right to their place among these, when (as in each of the instances alluded to above) the final event is a sealing of a foregoing word from the Lord; for so, as prophecy, as miracles of his *foreknowledge*, they claim that place, even if not as miracles of his *power*. Of course concerning these more than any other it will be true that they exist only for the religious mind, for the man who believes that God rules, and not merely in power, but in wisdom, in righteousness, and in love; for him they will be eminently *signs*, signs of a present working God. In the case of the more absolute miracle it will be sometimes possible to extort from the ungodly, as of old from the magicians of Egypt, the unwilling confession, "This is the finger of God" (Exod. viii. 19); but in the case of these this will be well nigh impossible; since there is always the natural solution in which they may take refuge, beyond which they will refuse, and beyond which it will be impossible to compel them, to proceed.

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\* The attempt to exhaust the history of our Lord's life of miracles by the supposition of wonderful fortuitous coincidences is singularly self-defeating. These might do for once or twice; but that such happy chances should on every occasion recur, what is this for one who knows even but a little of the theory of probabilities? not the delivering the history of its marvellous element, but the exchanging one set of marvels for another. If it be said that this was not mere hazard, what manner of person then *must* we conclude Him to be, whom nature was always thus at such pains to serve and to seal?

But while the miracle is not thus nature, so neither is it *against* nature. That language, however commonly in use, is yet wholly unsatisfactory, which speaks of these wonderful works of God as *violations* of a natural law. *Beyond* nature, *beyond* and *above* the nature which we know, they are, but not contrary to it. Nor let it be said that this distinction is an idle one; so far from being idle, Spinoza's whole assault upon the miracles (not his real objections, for they lie much deeper, but his assault\*) turns, as we shall see, upon the advantage which he has known how to take of this faulty statement of the truth; and, when that has been rightly stated, becomes at once beside the mark. The miracle is not thus *unnatural*, nor can it be; since the unnatural, the contrary to order, is of itself the ungodly, and can in no way therefore be affirmed of a divine work, such as that with which we have to do. The very idea of the world, as more than one name which it bears testifies, is that of *an order*; that which comes in then to enable it to realize this idea which it has lost, will scarcely itself be a disorder. So far from this, the true miracle is a higher and a purer nature, coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours, which so many discords have jarred and disturbed, and bringing this back again, though it be but for one mysterious prophetic moment, into harmony with that higher.† The healing of the sick can in no way be termed against nature, seeing that the sickness which was healed

\* *Tract. Theol. Pol. vi. De Miraculis.*

† Augustine (*Con. Faust. Ivi. 3*): *Contra naturam non incongrue dicimus aliquid Deum facere, quod facit contra id quod novimus in naturā. Hanc enim etiam appellamus naturam, cognitum nobis cursum solitumque naturae, contra quem cum Deus aliquid facit, magnalia vel mirabilia nominantur. Contra illam vero summam naturae legem a notitiā remotam sive impiorum sive adhuc infirmorum, tam Deus nullo modo facit quam contra scipsum non facit.* Cf. *ibid. xxix. 2*; and *De Civ. Dei. xxi. 8*. The speculations of the great thinkers of the thirteenth century, on the subject of miracles, and especially on this part of the subject, are well brought together by Neander (*Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. pp. 910 925).

was against the true nature of man, that it is sickness which is abnormal, and not health. The healing is the restoration of the primitive order. We should term the miracle not the infraction of a law, but behold in it the lower law neutralized, and for the time put out of working by a higher; and of this abundant analogous examples are evermore going forward before our eyes. Continually we behold in the world around us lower laws held in restraint by higher, mechanic by dynamic, chemical by vital, physical by moral; yet we say not, when the lower thus gives place in favour of the higher, that there was any violation of law, or that any thing contrary to nature came to pass;\* rather we acknowledge the law of a greater freedom swallowing up the law of a lesser.† Thus, when I lift my arm, the law of gravitation is not, as far as my arm is concerned, denied or annihilated; it exists as much as ever, but is held in suspense by the higher law of my will. The chemical laws which would bring about decay in animal substances still subsist, even when they are checked and hindered by the salt which keeps those substances from corruption. The law of sin in a regenerate man is held in

\* See a very interesting discussion upon this subject in Augustine, *De Gen. ad Lit.* vi. 14-18.

† When Spinoza affirmed that nothing can happen in nature which opposes its universal laws, he acutely saw that even then he had not excluded the miracle, and therefore, to clinch the exclusion, added—*aut quod ex iisdem [legibus] non sequitur*. But all which experience can teach us is, that these powers which are working in our world will not reach to these effects. Whence dare we to conclude, that because none which we know will bring them about, so none exist which will do so? They exceed the laws of *our* nature, but it does not therefore follow that they exceed the laws of *all* nature. If the animals were capable of a reflective act, man would appear a miracle to them, as the Angels do to us, and as the animals would themselves appear to a lower circle of organic life. The comet is a miracle as regards our solar system; that is, it does not own the laws of our system, neither do those laws explain it. Yet is there a higher and wider law of the heavens, whether fully discovered or not, in which its motions are included as surely as those of the planets which stand in immediate relation to our sun.

continual check by the law of the spirit of life; yet is it in his members still, not indeed working, for a mightier law has stepped in and now holds it in abeyance, but still there, and ready to work, did that higher law cease from its more effectual operation. What in each of these cases is wrought may be against one particular law, that law being contemplated in its isolation, and rent away from the complex of laws, whereof it forms only a part. But no law does stand thus alone, and it is not against, but rather in entire harmony with, the system of laws; for the law of those laws is, that where powers come into conflict, the weaker shall give place to the stronger, the lower to the higher. In the miracle, this world of ours is drawn into and within a higher order of things; laws are then at work in the world, which are not the laws of its fallen condition, for they are laws of mightier range and higher perfection; and as such they claim to make themselves felt, and to have the preëminence and predominance which are rightly their own.\* A familiar illustration borrowed from our own church-system of feasts and fasts may make this clearer. It is the rule here, that if the festival of the Nativity fall on a day which was designated in the ordinary calendar for a fast, the former shall displace the latter, and the day shall be observed as a festival. Shall we therefore say that the Church has awkwardly contrived two systems which here may, and sometimes do, come into collision with one another? and not rather admire her more complex law, and note how in the very concurrence of the two, with the displacement of the poorer by the richer, she brings out her sense that holy joy

\* In remarkable words the author of *The Wisdom of Solomon* (xix. 6) describes how at the passage of the Red Sea all nature was in its kind moulded and fashioned anew ( $\eta\; \kappaτίσις\; πάλιν\; ἀναθέν\; διετροῦτο$ ), that it might serve God's purposes for the deliverance of his people, and punishment of his enemies (cf. xi. 16, 17); and Sedulius (*Carm. Pasch.* i. 85):

Subditur onnis  
Imperiis natura tuis; ritunque soluto  
Transit in adversas jussu dominante figuras.

is a loftier thing even than holy sorrow, and shall at last swallow it up altogether?\*

It is with these wonders which have been, exactly as it will be with those wonders which we look for in regard of our own mortal bodies, and this physical universe. We do not speak of these changes which are in store for this and those, as violations of law. We should not speak of the resurrection of the body as something contrary to nature; as unnatural; yet no power now working upon our bodies could bring it about; it must be wrought by some power not yet displayed, which God has kept in reserve. So, too, the great change which is in store for the outward world, and out of which it shall issue as a new heaven and a new earth, far exceeds any energies now working in the world, to bring it to pass (however there may be predispositions for it now, starting points from which it will proceed); yet it so belongs to the true idea of the world, now so imperfectly realized, that when it does take place, it will be felt to be the truest nature, which only then at length shall have come perfectly to the birth.

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\* Thus Aquinas, whose greatness and depth upon the subject of miracles I well remember once hearing Coleridge exalt, and painfully contrast with the modern theology on the same subject (*Sum. Theol.* pars i. qu. 105, art. 6): *A quālibet causā derivatur aliquis ordo in suos effectus, eum quālibet causa habeat rationem principii. Et ideo secundum multiplicationem causarum multiplicantur et ordines, quorum unus continetur sub altero, sicut et causa continetur sub causā. Unde causa superior non continetur sub ordine causae inferioris, sed e converso. Cujus exemplum apparet in rebus humanis. Nam ex patrefamiliali dependet ordo domūs, qui continetur sub ordine civitatis, qui procedit a civitatis rectore: eum et hie continetur sub ordine regis, a quo totum regnum ordinatur. Si ergo ordo rerum consideretur prout dependet a primā causā, sic contra rerum ordinem Deus facere non potest. Si enim sic ficeret, faceret contra suam praescientiam aut voluntatem aut bonitatem. Si vero consideretur rerum ordo, prout dependet a quālibet secundarum causarum, sic Deus potest facere *præter* ordinem rerum; quia ordini secundarum causarum ipse non est subjectus; sed talis ordo ei subjicitur, quasi ab eo procedens, non per necessitatēm naturæ, sed per arbitrium voluntatis; potuisset enim et alium ordinem rerum instituere.*

The miracles, then, not being against nature, however they may be beside and beyond it, are in no respect slight cast upon its ordinary and every-day workings; but rather, when contemplated aright, are an honouring of these, in the witness which they render to the source from which these also originally proceed. For Christ, healing a sick man with his word, is in fact claiming in this to be the lord and author of all the healing powers which have ever exerted their beneficent influence on the bodies of men, and saying, "I will prove this fact, which you are ever losing sight of, that in Me the fontal power which goes forth in a thousand gradual cures resides, by this time only speaking a word, and bringing back a man unto perfect health;"—not thus cutting off those other and more gradual healings from his person, but truly linking them to it.\* So again when He multiplies the bread, when He changes the water into wine, what does He but say, "It is I and no other who, by the sunshine and the shower, by the seed-time and the harvest, give food for the use of man; and you shall learn this, which you are always in danger of unthankfully forgetting, by witnessing for once or for twice, or, if not actually witnessing, yet having it rehearsed in your ears for ever, how the essences of things are mine, how the bread grows in my hands, how the water, not drawn up into the vine, nor slowly transmuted into the juices of the grape, nor from thence exprest in the vat, but simply at my bidding, changes into wine. The children of this world 'sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag,' but it is I who, giving you in a moment the draught of fishes which you had yourselves long laboured for in vain, will

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\* Bernard Connor's *Evangelium Medici, seu Medicina Mystica*, London, 1697, awakened some attention at the time of its publication, and drew down many suspicions of infidelity on its author (see the *Biographie Universelle* under his name). I have not mastered the book, as it seemed hardly worth while; but on a slight acquaintance, my impression is that these charges against the author are without any ground. The book bears on this present part of our subject.

remind you *who* guides them through the ocean paths, and suffers you either to toil long and to take nothing, or crowns your labours with a rich and unexpected harvest of the sea."

—Even the single miracle which wears an aspect of severity, that of the withered fig-tree, speaks the same language, for in that the same gracious Lord is declaring, "These scourges of mine, wherewith I punish your sins, and summon you to repentance, continually miss their purpose altogether, or need to be repeated again and again; and this mainly because you see in them only the evil accidents of a blind nature; but I will show you that it is I and no other who smite the earth with a curse, who both can and do send these strokes for the punishing of the sins of men."

And we can quite perceive how all this should have been necessary.\* For if in one sense the orderly workings of nature reveal the glory of God (Ps. xix. 1-6), in another they hide that glory from our eyes; if they ought to make us continually to remember Him, yet there is danger that they lead us to forget Him, until this world around us shall prove—not a translucent medium, through which we behold Him, but a thick impenetrable veil, concealing Him wholly from our sight. Were there no other purpose in the miracles than this, namely to testify the liberty of God, and to affirm the will of God, which, however it habitually shows itself *in* nature, is yet more than and above nature, were it only to break a link in that chain of cause and effect, which else we should come to regard as itself God, as the iron chain of an inexorable necessity, binding heaven no less than earth, they would serve a great purpose, they would not have been wrought in vain. But there are other purposes than these,

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\* Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. ex. 4*): [Deus] reservans opportune inusitata prodigia, quæ infirmitas hominis novitati intenta meminrit, cum sint ejus miracula quotidiana majora. Tot per universam terram arbores creat, et nemo miratur; arefecit verbo unam, et stupefacta sunt corda mortalium. . . . Hoc enim miraculum maxime adtentis cordibus inhærebit, quod assiduitas non vilefecerit.

and purposes yet more nearly bearing on the salvation of men, to which they serve, and to the consideration of these we have now arrived.\*

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\* J. Müller (*De Mirac. J. C. Nat. et Necess.* par. i. p. 43): Etiam si nullus alius miraculorum esset usus, nisi ut absolutam illam divinæ voluntatis libertatem demonstrent, humanamq; arrogantiam, immodieæ legis naturalis admirationi junetam, compescant, miracula haud temere essent edita.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE AUTHORITY OF MIRACLES.

IS the miracle to command absolutely, and without further question, the obedience of those in whose sight it is done, or to whom it comes as an adequately attested fact, so that the doer and the doctrine, without further debate, shall be accepted as from God? It cannot be so, for side by side with the miracles which serve for the furthering of the kingdom of God, runs another line of wonders, counterworks of his who is ever the ape of the Most High; who has still his caricatures of the holiest; and who knows that in no way can he so realize his character of Satan, or "the Hinderer," as by offering that which shall either be accepted instead of the true, or, being discovered to be false, shall bring the true into like discredit with itself. For that it is meant in Scripture to attribute *real* wonders to him there seems to me no manner of doubt. They are "*lying* wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9), not because in themselves mere illusions and jugglery, but because they are wrought to support the kingdom of lies.\*

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\* Gerhard (*Loc. Theoll.* loc. xxiii. 11, 274): Antichristi miracula dicuntur mendacia, . . . . non tam ratione *formæ*, quasi omnia futura sint falsa et ad parentia duntaxat, quam ratione *finis*, quia scilicet ad confirmationem mendacii erunt directa. Chrysostom, who at first explains the passage in the other way, that they are "*lying*" quoad formam (οὐδὲν ἀληθές, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἀπάτην τὰ πάντα), yet afterwards suggests the correcter explanation, η διεψευσμένοις, η εἰς ψεῦδος ἄγονοι. Augustine (*Ie Civ. Dei*, xx. 19) does not absolutely determine for either. Solet ambigi, he says, utrum propterea dicta sint signa et prodigia mendacii, quoniam mortales sensus per phantasmatum decepturus sit [Antichristus]; ut quod non faciat, facere videatur; an quia illa ipsa, etiamsi erunt vera prodigia, ad mendacium pertrahent credituros non ea potuisse, nisi divinitus fieri, virtutem diaboli nescientes. According to Aquinas they will only be *relative* wonders (*Summ. Theol.* p. 1<sup>a</sup>, qu. 114, art. 4): Dæmones possunt facere miracula, quæ scilicet homines mirantur, in quantum eorum facultatem et cognitionem excedunt. Nam et unus homo in quantum facit aliquid quod est supra facultatem et cognitionem alterius, dueit aliud in admirationem sui operis, et quodam modo miraculum videatur operari.

. Thus I cannot doubt that, according to the intention of Scripture, we are meant to understand of the Egyptian magicians, that they stood in relation to a spiritual kingdom as truly as did Moses and Aaron. Indeed, only so does the conflict between those and these come out in its true significance. It loses the chiefest part of this significance if we think of their wonders as mere conjurors' tricks, dexterous sleights of hand, with which they imposed upon Pharaoh and his servants; making believe, and no more, that their rods also changed into serpents (Exod. vii. 11, 12), that they also changed water into blood (Exod. vii. 22). Rather was this a conflict not merely between the might of Egypt's king and the power of God; but *the gods* of Egypt, the spiritual powers of wickedness which underlay, and were the informing soul of, that dark and evil kingdom, were in conflict with the God of Israel. In this conflict, it is true, their nothingness very soon was apparent; their resources came very soon to an end; but yet most truly the two unseen kingdoms of light and darkness did then in presence of Pharaoh do open battle, each seeking to win the king for itself, and to draw him into its own element.\* Else, unless it had been such a conflict as this, what meaning would such passages have as that in Moses' Song, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods" (Exod. xv. 11)? or that earlier, "*Against all the gods* of Egypt

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\* The principal argument against this, is the fact that extraordinary feats of exactly like kinds are done by the modern Egyptian charmers; some, which are perfectly inexplicable, are recounted in the great French work upon Egypt, and attested by keen and sharp-sighted observers. But taking into consideration all which we know about these magicians, that they apparently have always constituted an hereditary guild, that the charmer throws himself into an ecstatic state, the question remains, how far there may not be here a wreck and surviving fragment of a mightier system, how far the charmers do not even now, consciously or unconsciously, bring themselves into relation with those evil powers, which more or less remotely do at the last underlie every form of heathen superstition. On this subject Hengstenberg (*Die Bücher Mose's und Ägypten*, pp. 97-103) has much of interesting matter.

I will execute judgment; I am the Lord" (Exod. xii. 12. cf. Numb. xxxiii. 4). As it was *then*, so probably was it again at the Incarnation, for Satan's open encounter of our Lord in the wilderness was but one form of his manifold opposition; and we seem to have a hint of a resistance similar to that of the Egyptian magicians in the withstandings of Paul which is attributed to Elymas (Acts xiii. 8. cf. 2 Tim. iii. 8).\* But whether at that time it was so, or not, so will it be certainly at the end of the world (Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 13). Thus it seems that at each great crisis and epoch of the kingdom, the struggle between the light and the darkness, which has ever been going forward, comes out into visible manifestation.

Yet, while the works of Antichrist and his organs are not mere tricks and juggleries, neither are they miracles in the very highest sense of the word; they only in part partake of the essential elements of the miracle. This they have, indeed, in common with it, that they are real works of a power which is suffered to extend thus far, and not merely dexterous feats of legerdemain; but this, also, which is most different, that they are abrupt, isolated, parts of no organic whole; not the highest harmonies, but the deepest discords, of the universe;† not the omnipotence of God wielding his own world to ends of grace and wisdom and love, but evil permitted to intrude into the hidden springs of things just so far as may suffice for its own deeper confusion in the end, and, in the mean while, for the needful trial and perfecting of God's saints and servants.‡

This fact, however, that the kingdom of lies has its won-

\* Gregory the Great (*Moral.* xxxiv. 3) has an interesting passage on the miracles of Antichrist. According to him, one of the great trials of the elect will be, the far more glorious miracles which he shall show, than any which in those last days the Church shall be allowed to accomplish. From the Church signs and wonders will be well nigh or altogether withdrawn, while the greatest and most startling of these will be at his beck.

† They have the *veritas formæ*, but not the *veritas finis*.

‡ See Augustine, *De Trin.* iii. 7-9.

ders no less than the kingdom of truth, would be alone sufficient to convince us that miracles cannot be appealed to absolutely and simply, in proof of the doctrine which the worker of them proclaims; and God's word expressly declares the same (Deut xiii. 1-5). A miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine, or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass. That which alone it claims for him at the first is a right to be listened to: it puts him in the alternative of being from heaven or from hell. The doctrine must first commend itself to the conscience as being *good*, and only then can the miracle seal it as *divine*. But the first appeal is from the doctrine to the conscience, to the moral nature in man. For all revelation presupposes in man a power of recognizing the truth when it is shown him,—that it will find an answer in him,—that he will trace in it the lineaments of a friend, though of a friend from whom he has been long estranged, and whom he has well nigh forgotten. It is the finding of a treasure, but of a treasure which he himself and no other had lost. The denial of this, that there is in man any organ by which truth may be recognized, opens the door to the most boundless scepticism, is indeed the denial of all that is godlike in man. But “he that is of God, heareth God's word,” and knows it for that which it proclaims itself to be.

It may be objected, indeed, If this be so, if there be this inward witness of the truth, what need then of the miracle? to what end does it serve, when the truth has accredited itself already? It has, indeed, accredited itself as good, as *from* God in the sense that all which is good and true is from Him, as whatever was precious in the teaching even of heathen sage or poet was from Him;—but not as yet as a new word directly from Him, a new speaking on his part to man. The miracles are to be the credentials for the bearer of that good word, signs that he has a special mission for the realization of the purposes of God in regard of humanity.\* When the

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\* Gregory the Great (*Hom. iv. in Evang.*): Unde et adjuncta sunt

truth has found a receptive heart, has awoke deep echoes in, the innermost soul of man, he who brings it may thus show that he stands yet nearer to God than others, that he is 'to be heard not merely as one that is true, but as himself the Truth (see Matt. xi. 4, 5; John v. 36); or at least, as a messenger standing in direct connexion with Him who is the Truth (1 Kin. xiii. 3); claiming unreserved submission, and the reception, upon his authority, of other statements which transcend the mind of man,—mysteries, which though, of course, not *against* that measure and standard of truth which God has given unto every man, yet which cannot be weighed or measured by it.

To demand such a sign from one who comes professing to be the utterer of a new revelation, the bringer of a direct message from God, to demand this, even when the word already commends itself as good, is no mark of disbelief, but on the contrary is a duty upon his part to whom the message is brought. Else might he lightly be persuaded to receive that as from God, which, indeed, was only the word of man. Credulity is as real, if not so great, a sin as disbelief. Thus it was no impiety on the part of Pharaoh to say to Moses and Aaron, "Show a miracle for you" (Exod. vii. 9, 10); on the contrary, it was altogether right for him to require this. They came averring they had a message for him from God: it was his duty to put them to the proof. His sin began, when he refused to believe their credentials. On the other hand, it was a mark of disbelief in Ahaz (Isai. vii. 10-13), however he might disguise it, that he *would not* ask a sign from God in confirmation of the prophet's word. Had that word been more precious to him, he would not have been satisfied till the seal was set to it; and that he did not care for the seal was a sure evidence that he did not truly care for the promise with which that was to be sealed.

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prædicationibus sanctis miracula; ut fidem verbis daret virtus ostensa,  
et nova facerent, qui nova prædicarent.

But the purpose of the miracle being, as we have seen, to confirm that which is good, so, upon the other hand, where the mind and conscience witness against the doctrine, not all the miracles in the world have a right to demand submission to the word which they seal.\* On the contrary, the great act of faith is to believe, against, and in despite of, them all, in what God has revealed to, and implanted in, the soul, of the holy and the true; not to believe another Gospel, though an Angel from heaven, or one transformed into such, should bring it (Deut. xiii. 3; Gal. i. 8†); and instead of compelling assent, miracles are then rather warnings to us that we keep aloof, for they tell us that not merely lies are here, for to that the conscience bore witness already, but that he who utters them is more than a common deceiver, is eminently "a liar and an Antichrist," a false prophet,—standing in more immediate connexion than other deceived and evil men to the kingdom of darkness, so that Satan has given him his power (Rev. xiii. 2), is using him to be an especial organ of his, and to do a signal work for him.‡

\* As Gregory the Great says well, The Church does not so much deny, as despise the miracles of heresies (*Moral.* xx. 7): *Sancta Ecclesia, etiam si qua fiunt hæreticorum miracula, despicit; quia hæc sanctitatis specimen non esse cognoscit.*

† Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, x. 16): *Si tantum hi [angeli] mirabilibus factis hunanas permoverent mentes, qui sacrificia sibi expetent: illi autem qui hoc prohibent, et uni tantum Deo sacrificari jubent, nequam ista visibilia miracula facere dignarentur, profecto non sensu corporis, sed ratione mentis præponenda eorum esset auctoritas.* So to the Manichæans he says (*Con. Faust.* xiii. 5): *Miracula non facitis; quæ si faceretis, etiam ipsa in vobis caveremus, præstruente nos Domino, et dicente, Exsurgent multi pseudo-christi et pseudo-prophetæ, et facient signa et prodigia multa.*

‡ Thus Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.* ii. xxxi. 3) calls such deceitful workers "precursors of the great Dragon," and speaks exactly this warning, saying, *Quos similiter atque illum devitare oportet, et quanto majore phantasmatæ operari dicuntur, tanto magis observare eos, quasi majorum nequitiae spiritum percepient.* And Tertullian, refuting Gnostics, who argued that there was no need that Christ should have been prophesied of beforehand, since He could at once prove his mission by his miracles [*per documenta virtutum*], replies (*Adv. Marc.* iii. 3): *At ego negabo solam hanc illi speciem ad testimonium competisse,*

But if these things are so, there might seem a twofold danger to which the simple and unlearned Christian would be exposed—the danger, first, of not receiving that which indeed comes from God, or secondly, of receiving that which comes from an evil source. But indeed these dangers do not beset the unlearned and the simple more than they beset and are part of the trial and temptation of every man; the safeguard from either of these fatal errors lying altogether in men's moral and spiritual, and not at all in their intellectual, condition. They only find the witness which the truth bears to itself to be no witness, they only believe the lying wonders, in whom the moral sense is already perverted; they have not before received the love of the truth, that they might be saved from believing a lie. Thus, then, their believing this lie and rejecting that truth is, in fact, but the final judgment upon them that have had pleasure in unrighteousness. With this view exactly agree the memorable words of St. Paul (2 Thess. ii. 9-12), wherein he declares that it is the anterior state of every man which shall decide whether he shall receive the lying wonders of Antichrist or reject them (cf. John v. 43). For while these come "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" to them whose previous condition has fitted them to embrace them, who have been ripening themselves for this extreme judgment, there is ever something in these wonders, something false, or immoral, or ostentatious, or something merely idle, which detects and lays them bare to a simple faith, and for that at once broadly differences them from those which belong to the kingdom of the truth.\*

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quam et Ipse postmodum exauctoravit. Siquidem edicens multos venturos, et signa facturos, et virtutes magnas edituros, aversionem [eversionem?] etiam electorum; nec ideo tamen admittendos, temerariam signorum et virtutum fidem ostendit, ut etiam apud pseudochristos facillimaru[m].

\* "You complain," says Dr. Arnold, in a letter to Dr. Hawkins (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 220), "of those persons who judge of a revelation not by its evidence, but by its substance. It has always seemed to me

These differences have been often brought out. Such miracles are immoral,\* or if not so, yet futile, without consequences, leading to and ending in nothing. For as the miracle, standing as it does in connexion with highest moral ends, must not be itself an immoral act, so may it not be in itself an act merely futile, issuing in vanity and nothingness. This is the argument which Origen continually uses, when he is plied with the alleged miracles of heathen saints and sages. He counts, and rightly, that he has sufficiently convinced them of falsehood, when he has asked, and obtained no answer to, this question, "What came of these? In what did they issue? Where is the society which has been founded by their help? What is there in the world's history which they have helped forward, to show that they lay deep in the mind and counsel of God? The miracles of Moses issued in a Jewish polity; those of the Lord in a Christian Church; whole nations were knit together through their help.† What have your boasted Apollonius or Esculapius to show as the fruit of theirs? What traces have they left behind them?"‡ And not merely, he goes on to say, were Christ's miracles

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that its substance is a most essential part of its evidence; and that miracles wrought in favour of what was foolish or wicked, would only prove Manicheism. We are so perfectly ignorant of the unseen world, that the character of any supernatural power can only be judged by the moral character of the statements which it sanctions. Thus only can we tell whether it be a revelation from God or from the Devil."

\* Thus Arnobius (*Adv. Gen.* i. 48) of the heathen wonder-workers: *Quis enim hos nesciat aut imminentia studere prænoscere, quæ necessario (velint nolint) suis ordinationibus veniunt? aut mortiferam immittere quibus libuerit tabem, aut familiarium dirumpere caritates: aut sine clavibus reserare, quæ clausa sunt; aut ora silentio vineire, aut in curriculis equos debilitare, incitare, tardare; aut uxoribus et liberis alienis (sive illi mares sint, sive fœminei generis) inconcessi amoris flammæ et furiales immittere cupiditates?* Cf. Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* ii. xxxi. 2, 3.

† *Con. Cels.* ii. 51: Ἐθνῶν δὲ τὸν συστάντων μετὰ τὰ σημεῖα αὐτῶν.

‡ *Ibid.* i. 67: Δεικνύτωσαν γέμην Ἑλληνες τῶν κατειλεγμένων τινὸς βιωφελὲς, λαμπρὸν, καὶ παρατείναν ἐπὶ τὰς ὕστερον γενεὰς, καὶ τηλικοῦτον ἔργον, ὃς ἐμποιεῖν πιθανότητα τῷ περὶ αὐτῶν μύθῳ, λέγοντι ἀπὸ θείας αὐτοὺς γεγονέναι σποράς.

effectual, but effectual for good,—and such good was their distinct purpose and aim; for this is the characteristic distinction between the dealer in false shows of power and the true worker of divine works, that the latter has ever the reformation of men in his eye, and seeks always to forward this; while the first, whose own work is built upon fraud and lies, can have no such purpose of destroying that very kingdom out of which he himself springs.\*

These, too, are marks of the true miracles, and marks very nearly connected with the foregoing, that they are never mere freaks and plays of power, done as in wantonness, and for their own sakes, with no need compelling, for show and ostentation. With good right in that remarkable religious romance of earliest Christian times, *The Recognitions of Clement*,† and in the cognate *Clementine Homilies*,‡ Peter is made to draw a contrast between the wonderful works of Christ and those alleged by the followers of Simon Magus to have been wrought by their master. Speaking of the last, he asks what profit, what significance was there in his dogs of brass or stone that barked, his talking statues, his flights through the air, his transformations of himself now into a serpent, now into a goat, his putting on of two faces, his rolling himself unhurt upon burning coals, and the like?—which even if he had done, the works possessed no meaning; they stood in relation to nothing; they were not, what each true miracle is always more or less, *redemptive* acts; in other words, works not merely of power but of grace, each one an index and a prophecy of the inner work of man's deliverance, which it accompanies and helps forward.§ But, as we should

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\* *Con. Cels.* i. 68; cf. Eusebius. *Dem. Evang.* iii. 6.

† iii. 6 (*Cotelerii Patt. Apost.* vol. i. p. 529).

‡ *Hom.* ii. 32-44 (*ibid.* p. 629).

§ iii. 60 (*ibid.* p. 529): Nam die, quæeso, quæ utilitas est ostendere statuas ambulantes? latrare æreos aut lapideos canes? salire montes? volare per aërem? et alia his similia, quæ dicitis fecisse Simonem? Quæ autem a Bono sunt, ad hominum salutem deferuntur; ut sunt illa quæ fecit Dominus noster, qui fecit cæcos videre,

justly expect, it was preëminently thus with the miracles of Christ. Each of these is in small, and upon one side or another, a partial and transient realization of the great work, which He came that in the end He might accomplish perfectly and for ever. They are all pledges, in that they are themselves first-fruits, of his power; in each of them the *word* of salvation is incorporated in an *act* of salvation. Only when regarded in this light do they appear not merely as illustrious examples of his might, but also as glorious manifestations of his holy love.

It is worth while to follow this a little in detail. What evils are they, which hinder man from reaching the true end and aim of his creation, and from which he needs a redemption? It may briefly be answered that they are sin in its moral and in its physical manifestations. If we regard its moral manifestations, the darkness of the understanding, the wild discords of the spiritual life, none were such fearful examples of its tyranny as the demoniacs; they were special objects, therefore, of the miraculous power of the Lord. Then if we ask ourselves what are the physical manifestations of sin; they are sicknesses of all kinds, fevers, palsies, leprosies, blindness, each of these death beginning, a partial death—and finally, the death absolute of the body. This region therefore is fitly another, as it is the widest region, of his redemptive grace. In the conquering and removing of these evils, He eminently bodied forth the idea of Himself as the Redeemer of men. But besides these, sin has its manifestations more purely physical; it reveals itself and its consequences in the tumults and strife of the elements among themselves, as in the rebellion of nature against man; for the destinies of the natural world were linked to the destinies of man; and when he fell, he drew after him his whole inhe-

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fecit surdos audire; debiles et claudos erexit, languores et dæmones effugavit. . . . Ista ergo signa quæ ad salutem hominum prosunt, et aliquid boni hominibus conferunt, Malignus facere non potest. Cf. Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* II. xxxii. 3.

ritance, which became subject to the same vanity as himself. Therefore do we behold the Lord, Him in whom the lost prerogatives of the race were recovered, walking on the stormy waves, or quelling the menace of the sea with his word; incorporating in these acts the deliverance of man from the rebellious powers of nature, which had risen up against him, and instead of being his willing servants, were often-times now his tyrants and his destroyers. These also were redemptive acts. Even the two or three of his works which seem not to range themselves so readily under any of these heads, yet are not indeed exceptions. For instance, the multiplying of the bread easily shows itself as such. The original curse of sin was the curse of barrenness,—the earth yielding hard-won and scanty returns to the sweat and labour of man; but here this curse is removed, and in its stead the primeval abundance for a moment re-appears. All scantness and scarceness, such as this lack of bread in the wilderness, such as that failing of the wine at the marriage-feast, belonged not to man as his portion at the first; for all the earth was appointed to serve him, and to pour the fulness of its treasure into his lap. That he ever should hunger or thirst, that he should ever have lack of any thing, was a consequence of Adam's sin,—fitly, therefore, removed by Him, the second Adam, who came to give him back all which had been forfeited by the first.

The miracle, then, being this ethical act, and only to be received when it is so, and when it seals doctrines of holiness, the forgetting or failing to bring forward that the divine miracle must, of necessity, move in this sphere of redemption only, that the doctrine also is to try the miracle, as well as the miracle to seal the doctrine, is a most dangerous omission on the part of many who, in modern times, have written "*Evidences of Christianity*," and have found in the miracles wrought by its Founder, and in those mainly as acts of power, well-nigh the exclusive argument for its reception as a divine revelation. On the place which these works should take in

the array of proofs for the things which we believe, there will be occasion, by and by, to speak. For the present it may be sufficient to observe, that if men are taught that they should believe in Christ upon no other grounds than because He attested his claims by works of wonder, and that simply on this score they shall do so, how shall they consistently refuse belief to any other, who shall come attesting his claims by the same? We have here a paving of the way of Antichrist, for as we know that he will have his signs and wonders (2 Thess. ii. 9), so, if this argument is good, he will have right on the score of these to claim the faith and allegiance of men. But no; the miracle must witness for itself, and the doctrine must witness for itself, and then, and then only, the first is capable of witnessing for the second;\* and those books of Christian evidences are utterly maimed and imperfect, fraught with the most perilous consequences, which reverence in the miracle little else but its power, and see in that alone what gives either to it its attesting worth, or to the doctrine its authority as adequately attested truth.

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\* Gerhard (*Loc. Theoll.* loc. xxiii. 11): *Miracula sunt doctrinæ tesseræ ac sigilla; quemadmodum igitur sigillum a literis avulsum nihil probat, ita quoque miracula sine doctrinâ nihil valent.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### *THE EVANGELICAL, COMPARED WITH OTHER CYCLES OF MIRACLES.*

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#### 1. THE MIRACLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE miracles of our Lord and those of the O. T. afford many interesting points of comparison; and this comparison is equally instructive, whether we trace the points of likeness, or of unlikeness, which exist between them. Thus, to note first a remarkable difference, we find often-times the holy men of the old covenant bringing, if one may venture so to speak, hardly, and with difficulty, the wonder-work to pass; it is not born without pangs; there is sometimes a momentary pause, a seeming uncertainty about the issue; while the miracles of Christ are always accomplished with the highest ease; He speaks, and it is done. Thus Moses must plead and struggle with God, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee," ere the plague of leprosy is removed from his sister, and not even so can he instantly win the boon (Num. xii. 13-15); but Christ heals a leper by his touch (Matt. viii. 3), or ten with even less than this, merely by the power of his will and at a distance\* (Luke xvii. 14). Elijah must pray long, and his servant go up seven times, before tokens of the rain appear (1 Kin. xviii. 42-44); he stretches himself thrice on the child and cries unto the Lord, and painfully wins back its life (1 Kin. xvii. 21, 22); and Elisha, with yet more of effort and only after partial failure (2 Kin. iv. 31-35), restores the child of the Shunammite to life. Christ, on the other hand, shows Himself the Lord of the living and the dead, raising the dead with as much ease

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\* Cyril of Alexandria (Cramer's *Cat. in Luc.* v. 12) has observed and drawn out the contrast.

as He performed the commonest transactions of life.—In the miracles wrought by men, glorious acts of faith as they are, for they are ever wrought in reliance on the strength and faithfulness of God, who will follow up and seal his servant's word, it is yet possible for human impatience and human unbelief to break out. Thus Moses, God's organ for the work of power, speaks hastily and acts unbelievingly (Num. xx. 11). It is needless to say of the Son, that his confidence ever remains the same, that his Father hears Him always; no admixture of even the slightest human infirmity mars the completeness of his work.

Where the miracles are similar in kind, his are larger and freer and more glorious. Elisha feeds a hundred men with twenty loaves (2 Kin. iv. 42-44), but He five thousand with five.\* Others have continually their instrument of power to which the wonder-working power is linked. Thus Moses has his rod, his staff of wonder, to divide the Red Sea, and to accomplish his other mighty acts, without which he is nothing (Exod. vii. 19; viii. 5, 16; ix. 23; x. 13; xiv. 16, &c.); his tree to heal the bitter waters (Exod. xv. 25); Elijah divides the river with his mantle (2 Kin. ii. 8); Elisha heals the spring with a cruse of salt (2 Kin. ii. 20). But Christ accomplishes his miracles simply by the agency of his word, or by a touch (Matt. xx. 34); or if He takes anything as a channel of his healing power, it is from Himself He takes it (Mark vii. 33; viii. 23†); or should He, as once He

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Mare.* iv. 35): *Aliter Dominus per semet ipsum operatur, sive per Filium; aliter per prophetas famulos suos; maxime documenta virtutis et potestatis; quae ut clariora et validiora, qua propria, distare a vicariis fas est.*

† In the East the Mahometans had probably a sense of the fitness of this, namely, that Christ should find all in Himself, when they made his healing virtue to have resided in his breath (Tholuck, *Blüthensamml. aus d. Morgenl. Myst.* p. 62), to which also they were led as being the purest and least material effluence of the body (cf. John xx. 22). So Abgarus, in the apocryphal letter which bears his name, magnifies Christ's healings, in that they were done ἀνεύ φαρμάκων καὶ βοτανῶν. Arnobius too (*Adv. Gent.* i. 43, 44, 48, 52) lays great stress

does, use any foreign medium in part (John ix. 6), yet by other miracles of like kind, in which He has recourse to no such extraneous helps, He declares plainly that this was of free choice, and not of any necessity. And, which is but another side of the same truth, while the miracles of Moses, or of the Apostles, are ever done in the name of, and with the attribution of the glory to, another, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which *He* will show you" (Exod. xiv. 13), "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts iii. 6), "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole" (Acts ix. 34. cf. Mark xvi. 17; Luke x. 17; John xiv. 10); his are ever wrought in his own name and by a power immanent and inherent in Himself: "*I will*, be thou clean" (Matt. viii. 3); "Thou deaf and dumb spirit, *I* charge thee come out of him" (Mark ix. 25); "Young man, *I* say unto thee, Arise" (Luke vii. 14\*). Where He prays, being about to perform one of his mighty works, his disciples shall learn even from his prayer itself that herein He is not asking for a power not indwelling in Him, but indeed only testifying thus to the unbroken oneness of his life with his Father's (John xi. 41, 42†); just as on another occasion He will not suffer his disciples to suppose that it is for any but for their sakes that the testimony from heaven is borne unto Him (John xii. 30). Thus needful was it for them, thus needful for all, that they should have great and exclusive thoughts of Him, and should not class Him with any other, even the greatest and holiest of the children of men.

These likenesses and unlikenesses are equally such as beforehand we should have naturally expected. We should have expected the mighty works of either covenant to be like,

upon the point, that all which He did was done sine ullis adminiculis rerum; he is comparing, it is true, our Lord's miracles with the lying wonders of the *yōrtes*, not with the only relatively inferior of the O. T.

\* See on all this subject Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. 2; and Geyhard's *Loc. Theoll.* loc. iv. 5, 59.

† Cf. Ambrose, *De Fide*, iii. 4.

since the old and new form parts of one organic whole; and it is ever God's law that the lower should contain the germs and prophetic intimations of the higher. We should expect them to be unlike, since the very idea of God's kingdom is that of progress, of a gradually fuller communication and larger revelation of Himself to men, so that He who in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets, did at length speak unto us by his Son; and it was only meet that this Son should be clothed with mightier powers than theirs, and powers which He held not from another, but such rather as were evidently his own in fee.\*

And this, too, explains a difference in the character of the miracles of the two covenants, and how it comes to pass that those of the old wear oftentimes a far severer aspect than the new. They are miracles, indeed, of God's grace, but yet also miracles of the Law, of that Law which worketh wrath, which will teach, at all costs, the lesson of the awful holiness of God, his hatred of the sinner's sin,—a lesson which men had all need thoroughly to learn, lest they should mistake and abuse the new lesson which a Saviour taught, of God's love at the same time toward the sinner himself. Miracles of the Law, they preserve a character that accords with the Law; being oftentimes fearful outbreaks of God's anger against the unrighteousness of men; such for instance are the signs and wonders in Egypt, many of those in the desert (Num. xvi. 31; Lev. x. 2), and some which the later prophets wrought (2 Kin. i. 10-12; ii. 23-25); leprosies are inflicted (Num. xii. 10; 2 Chr. xxvi. 19), not removed; a sound hand is withered and dried up (1 Kin. xiii. 4), not a

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\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iii. *passim*) brings this out in a very interesting manner; and Eusebius (*Dem. Evang.* iii. 2) traces in the same way the parallelisms between the life of Moses and of Christ. They supposed that in so doing they were, if any thing, confirming the truth of either, though now the assailants of Revelation will have it that these coincidences are only calculated to cast suspicion upon both.

withered hand restored. Not but that these works also are, for the most part what our Lord's are altogether and with no single exception, namely, works of evident grace and mercy. I affirm this of *all* our Lord's miracles; for that single one, which seems an exception, the cursing of the barren fig-tree, has no right really to be considered such. Indeed it is difficult to see how our blessed Lord could more strikingly have shown his purpose of preserving throughout for his miracles their character of beneficence, or have witnessed for Himself that He was come not to destroy men's lives but to save them, than in this circumstance,—that when He needed in this very love to declare, not in word only but in act, what would be the consequences of an obstinate unfruitfulness and resistance to his grace, and thus to make manifest the severer side of his ministry, He should have chosen for the showing out of this, not one among all the sinners who were about Him, but should rather have displayed his power upon a tree, which, itself incapable of feeling, might yet effectually serve as a sign and warning to men. He will not allow even a single exception to the rule of grace and love.\* When He

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\* Compare Lord Bacon's excellent remarks, in his *Meditationes Sacrae*, where on the words, *Bene omnia fecit* (Mark vii. 37), in which he sees rightly an allusion to Gen. i. 31, he says: *Verus plausus: Deus cum universa crearet, vidit quod singula et omnia erant bona nimis. Deus Verbum in miraculis quae edidit (omne autem miraculum est nova creatio, et non ex lege primae creationis) nil facere voluit, quod non gratiam et beneficentiam omnino spiraret. Moses edidit miracula, et profligavit Aegyptios pestibus multis: Elias edidit, et oclusit cœlum ne plueret super terram; et rursus edidit de cœlo ignem Dei super duces et cohortes: Elizæus edidit, et evocavit ursas e deserto, quæ laniarent impuberes; Petrus Ananiam sacrilegum hypocritam morte, Paulus Elymam magum cæcitate, percussit: sed nihil hujusmodi fecit Jesus. Descendit super eum Spiritus in formâ columbae, de quo dixit, Nescitis ejus spiritus sitis. Spiritus Jesu, spiritus columbinus: fuerunt illi servi Dei tanquam boves Dei tritantes granum, et conculcantes paleam; sed Jesus agnus Dei sine irâ et judiciis. Omnia ejus miracula circa corpus humanum, et doctrina ejus circa animam humanam. Indigit corpus hominis alimento, defensione ab externis, et curâ. Ille multitudinem piscium in retibus congregavit, ut uberiorem victum hominibus præberet: ille alimen-*

blesses, it is men; but when He smites, it is an unfeeling tree.\* More upon this matter must be deferred till the time comes for treating that miracle in its order.

It is also noticeable that the region in which the miracles of the O. T. chiefly move, is that of extenal nature; they are the cleaving of the sea (Exod. xiv. 21), or of a river (Josh. iii. 14; 2 Kin. ii. 8, 14), yawnings of the earth (Num. xvi. 31), fire falling down from heaven (1 Kin. xviii. 38; 2 Kin. i. 10, 12), furnaces which have lost their power to consume (Dan. iii.), wild-beasts which have laid aside their inborn fierceness in whole (Dan. vi. 18, 22), or in part (1 Kin. xiii. 24, 28), and the like. Not of course that they are exclusively these; but this nature is the haunt and main region of the miracle in the O. T., as in the New it is mainly the sphere of man's life in which it is at home. And consistently with this, the earlier miracles, done as the greater number of them were, in the presence of the giant powers of heathendom, have oftentimes a colossal character: those powers of the world are strong, but the God of Israel will show Himself to be stronger yet. Thus it is with the miracles of Egypt, the miracles of Babylon: they are miracles eminently of strength;† for under the influence of the great

tum aquae in dignius alimentum vini ad exhilarandum eorū hominis convertit; ille sicut quod officio suo ad quod destinatum fuit, ad cibum hominis videlicet, non fungeretur, arefieri jussit: ille penuriam panum et piscium ad alendum exercitum populi dilatavit: ille ventos, quod navigantibus minarentur, corripuit. . . . Nullum miraculum judicii, oīnīa beneficentia, et circa corpus humanum.

\* It is from this point of view that we should explain our Saviour's rebuke to the sons of Zebedee, when they wanted to call down fire from heaven on a village of the Samaritans, "as Elias did" (Luke ix. 54); to repeat, that is, an O.-T. miracle. Christ's answer, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," is not, as it is often explained, "Ye are mistaking a spirit of bitter zeal for a spirit of love to Me;"—but the rebuke is gentler, "Ye are mistaking and confounding the different standing-points of the old and new covenant, taking your stand upon the old, that of an avenging righteousness, when you should rejoice to take it upon the new, that of a forgiving love."

† We find the false Christs, who were so plentiful about the time

nature-worships of those lands, all religion had assumed a colossal grandeur. Compared with our Lord's works wrought in the days of his flesh, those were the whirlwind and the fire, and his as the still small voice which followed. In that old time God was teaching his people, He was teaching also the nations with whom his people were brought wonderfully into contact, that He who had entered into covenant with one among all the nations, was not one God among many, the God of the hills, or the God of the plains (1 Kin. xx. 23), but that the God of Israel was the Lord of the whole earth.

But Israel at the time of the Incarnation had thoroughly learned that lesson, much else as it had still to learn: and the whole civilized world had practically outgrown polytheism, however as the popular superstition it may have lingered still. And thus the works of our Lord, though they bear not on their front the imposing character which did those of old, yet contain higher and deeper truths. They are eminently miracles of the Incarnation, of the Son of God who had taken our flesh, and who, taking, would heal it. They have predominantly a relation to man's body and his spirit. Miracles of nature assume now altogether a subordinate place: they still survive, even as we could have ill afforded wholly to have lost them; for this region of nature must still be claimed as part of Christ's dominion, though not its chiefest or its noblest province. But man, and not nature, is now the main subject of these mighty powers; and thus it comes to pass that, with less of outward pomp, less to startle and amaze,

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of our Lord's coming, professing and promising to do exactly the same works as those wrought of yore,—to repeat even on a larger scale these O.-T. miracles. Thus "that Egyptian" whom the Roman tribune supposed that he saw in Paul (Acts xxi. 38), and of whom Josephus gives us a fuller account (*Antt.* xx. 8, 6), led a tumultuous crowd to the Mount of Olives, promising to show them from thence how, as a second and a greater Joshua, he would cause the walls, not of Jericho, but of Jerusalem, to fall to the ground at his bidding (see Vitringa's interesting *Essay, De Signis a Messia edendis*, in his *Obss. Sac.* vol. i. p. 482).

the new have a yet deeper inward significance than the old.\*

## 2. THE MIRACLES OF THE APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS.

The apocryphal gospels, abject productions as, whether contemplated in a literary or moral point of view, they must be allowed to be, are yet instructive in this respect, that they show us what manner of gospels were the result, when men drew from their own fancy, and devised Christs of their own, instead of resting upon the basis of historic truth, and delivering to the world faithful records of Him who indeed had lived and died among them.' Here, as ever, the glory of the true comes out into strongest light by its comparison with the false. But in nothing, perhaps, are these apocryphal gospels more worthy of note, than in the difference between the main features of their miracles and those of the canonical Gospels. Thus in the canonical, the miracle is indeed essential, yet, at the same time, ever subordinated to the doctrine which it confirms,—a link in the great chain of God's manifestation of Himself to men; its ethical significance never falls into the background, but the wonder-work of grace and power has, in every case where this can find room, nearer or remoter reference to the moral condition of the person or persons in whose behalf it is wrought. The miracles ever lead us off from themselves to their Author; they appear as emanations from the glory of the Son of God; but it is in Him we rest, and not in them; they are but the halo round Him; and have their worth from Him, not contrariwise, He from them. They are held, too, together by his strong and central personality, which does not leave them a conglomerate

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\* Julian the Apostate had indeed so little an eye for the glory of such works as these, that in one place he says (Cyril, *Adv. Jul.* vi.), Jesus did nothing wonderful, "unless any should esteem that to have healed some lame and blind, and exorcised some demoniacs in villages like Bethsaida and Bethany, were very wonderful works."

of marvellous anecdotes accidentally heaped together, but parts of a great organic whole, of which every part is in vital coherence with all other. But it is altogether otherwise in these apocryphal narratives. To say that the miracles occupy in them the foremost place would very inadequately express the facts of the case. They are every thing. Some of these so-called histories are nothing else but a string of these; which yet (and this too is singularly characteristic) stand wholly disconnected from the ministry of Christ. Not one of them belongs to the period after his Baptism, but they are all miracles of the Infancy,—in other words, of that time whereof the canonical history relates no miracle, and not merely does not relate any, but is remarkably at pains to tell us that during it no miracle was wrought, the miracle in Cana of Galilee being his first (John ii. 11).

It follows of necessity that they are never seals of a word and doctrine which has gone before; they are never “signs,” but at the best wonders and portents. Any high purpose and aim is clearly altogether absent from them. It is never felt that the writer is writing out of any higher motive than to excite and feed a childish love of the marvellous, never that he could say, “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John xx. 31). Indeed, so far from having a *religious*, they are often wanting in a *moral* element. The Lord Jesus appears in them as a wayward, capricious, passionate child; to be feared indeed, seeing that He is furnished with such formidable powers of avenging every wrong or accidental injury which He meets; and so bearing Himself, that the request which the parents of some other children are represented as making, that He may be kept within the house, for He brings harm and mischief wherever He comes, is perfectly justified by the facts.

It may be well to cite a few examples in proof, however harshly some of them may jar on the Christian ear. Thus some children refuse to play with Him, hiding themselves

from Him ; He pursues and turns them into kids.\* Another child by accident runs against Him and throws Him down ; whereupon He, being exasperated,† exclaims, “As thou hast made me to fall, so shalt thou fall and not rise ;” at the same hour the child fell down and expired.‡ He has a dispute with the master who is teaching Him letters, concerning the order in which He shall go through the Hebrew alphabet, and his master strikes Him ; whereupon Jesus curses him, and straightway his arm is withered, and he falls on his face and dies.§ This goes on, till at length Joseph says to Mary, “Henceforward let us keep Him within doors, for whosoever sets himself against Him, perishes.” His passionate readiness to avenge Himself shows itself at the very earliest age. At five years old He has made a pool of water, and is moulding sparrows from the clay. Another child, the son of a scribe, displeased that He should do this on the Sabbath, opens the sluices of his pool and lets out the water. On this Jesus is indignant, gives him many injurious names, and causes him to wither and wholly dry up with his curse.||

Such is the image which the authors of these books give us of the holy child Jesus ;—and no wonder ; for man is not only unable to realize the perfect, he is unable to conceive it. The idea is as much a gift, as the power to realize that idea. Even the miracles which are not of this revolting character are childish tricks, like the tricks of a conjuror, never solemn acts of power and love. Jesus enters the shop of a dyer, who has received various cloths from various persons to be dyed

\* *Evang. Infant.* 40, in Thilo’s *Cod. Apoc.* p. 115 ; to whose admirable edition of the apocryphal gospels the references in this section are made throughout.

† Πικρανθεῖς.

‡ *Evang. Infant.* 47, p. 123 ; cf. *Evang. Thom.* 4, p. 284.

§ *Evang. Infant.* 49, p. 125. In the *Evang. Thom.* 14, p. 307, he only falls into a swoon, and something afterwards pleasing Jesus (15), he raises him up again.

|| *Evang. Thom.* 3, p. 282. This appears with variations in the *Evang. Infant.* 46, p. 122.

of divers colours. In the absence of the master, He throws them all into the dying vat together, and when the dyer returns and remonstrates, draws them out of the vat, each dyed according to the colour which was enjoined.\* He and some other children make birds and animals of clay; while each is boasting the superiority of his work, Jesus says, “I will cause those which I have made to go;”—which they do, the animals leaping and the birds flying, and at his bidding returning, and eating and drinking from his hand.† While yet an infant at his mother’s breast, He bids a palm-tree to stoop that she may pluck the fruits; it obeys, and only returns to its position at his command.‡ Another time his mother sends Him to the well for water; the pitcher breaks, and He brings the water in his cloak.§ And as the miracles which He does, so those that are done in regard of Him, are idle or monstrous; the ox and ass worshipping Him, a new-born infant in the crib, may serve for an example.||

In all these, as will be observed, the idea of *redemptive* acts altogether falls out of sight; they are none of them the outward clothing of the inward facts of man’s redemption. Of course it is not meant to be affirmed that miracles of healing and of grace are *altogether* wanting in these books;¶ that would evidently have been incompatible with any idea of a Redeemer; but only that they do not present to us any clear and consistent image of a Saviour full of grace and power, but an image rather, continually distorted and defaced by lines of passion and caprice, of peevishness and anger. The most striking, perhaps, of the miracles related in regard of the child Jesus, is that of the falling down of the idols of

\* *Evang. Infant.* 37, p. 111.

† *Ibid.* 36.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 395.

§ *Ibid.* p. 121.

|| *Ibid.* p. 382.

¶ For instance, Simon the Canaanite (*ibid.* p. 117) is healed, while yet a child, of the bite of a serpent. Yet even in miracles such as this there is always something that will not let us forget that we are moving in another world from that in which the sacred Evangelists place us.

Egypt at his presence in the land ; for it has in it something of a deeper significance, as a symbol and prophecy of the overthrow of the idol worship of the world by Him who was now coming into the world.\* The lions and the leopards gathering harmlessly round Him as He passed through the desert on the way to Egypt, is again not alien to the true spirit of the Gospel, and has its analogy in the words of St. Mark, that He “was with the wild-beasts” (i. 13) ; words which certainly are not introduced merely to enhance the savageness of the wilderness where He spent those forty days of temptation, but are meant as a hint to us that in Him, the new head of the race, the second Adam, the Paradisaical state was once more given back (Gen. i. 28). But with a very few such partial exceptions as these, the apocryphal gospels are a barren and dreary waste of wonders without object or aim ; and only instructive as making us strongly to feel, more strongly than but for these examples we might have felt, how needful are other factors besides power for the producing of a true miracle ; that wisdom and love must be there also ; that where men conceive of power as its chiefest element, they give us only a hateful mockery of the divine. Had a Christ such as these gospels portray actually lived upon the earth, he had been no more than a potent and wayward magician, from whom all men would have shrunk with a natural instinct of distrust and fear.

### 3. THE LATER, OR ECCLESIASTICAL, MIRACLES.

It would plainly lead much too far from the subject in hand to enter into any detailed examination of the authority upon which the later, or, as they may be conveniently termed, the ecclesiastical, miracles come to us. Yet a few words must of necessity find place concerning the permanent miraculous gifts which have been claimed for the Church as her rightful

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\* *Evang. Infant.* 10-12, pp. 75-77; cf. 1 Sam. v. 3, 4.

heritage, equally by some who have gloried in their presumed presence, and by others who have lamented their absence—by those alike who have seen in their presence the evidences of her sanctity, or in their absence, of her degeneracy and fall. It is not my belief that she has this gift of working miracles, nor yet that she was intended to have, and only through her own unfaithfulness has lost, it; nor that her Lord has abridged her of aught that would have made her strong and glorious in not endowing her with powers such as these. With reasons enough for humbling herself, yet I do not believe that among those reasons is to be accounted her inability to perform these works that should transcend nature. So many in our own day have arrived at a directly opposite conclusion, that it will be needful shortly to justify the opinion here exprest.

And first, as a strong presumption against the intended continuance of these powers in the Church, may be taken the analogies derived from the earlier history of God's dealings with his people. We do not find the miracles sown broadcast over the whole O.-T. history, but they all cluster round a very few eminent persons, and have reference to certain great epochs and crises of the kingdom of God. Abraham, the father of the faithful,—David, the theocratic king,—Daniel, the “man greatly beloved,” are alike entirely without them; that is, they *do* no miracles; such may be accomplished in behalf of them, but they themselves accomplish none. In fact there are but two great outbursts of these; the first, at the establishing of the kingdom under Moses and Joshua, on which occasion it is at once evident that they could not have been wanting; the second in the time of Elijah and Elisha; and then also there was utmost need, when it was a question whether the court religion which the apostate kings of Israel had set up, should not quite overbear the true worship of Jehovah, when the Levitical priesthood was abolished, and the faithful were but a scattered few among the ten tribes. Then, in that decisive epoch of the

kingdom's history, the two great prophets, they too in a subordinate sense the beginners of a new period, arose, equipped with powers which should witness that He whose servants *they* were, was the God of Israel, however Israel might refuse to acknowledge *Him*. There is in all this an entire absence of prodigality in the use of miracles; they are ultimate resources, reserved for the great needs of God's kingdom, not its daily incidents; they are not cheap off-hand expedients, which may always be appealed to, but come only into play when nothing else would have supplied their room. How unlike this moderation to the wasteful expenditure of miracles in the legends of the middle ages! There no perplexity can occur so trifling that a miracle will not be brought in to solve it; there is almost no saint, certainly no distinguished one, without his *nimbus* of miracles around his head; they are adorned with these in rivalry with one another, in rivalry with Christ Himself; no acknowledgment like this, "John did no miracle" (John x. 41), in any of the records of their lives finding place.

We must add to this the declarations of Scripture, which I have already entered on at large, concerning the object of miracles, that they are for the confirming the word by signs following, for authenticating a message as being from heaven—that signs are for the unbelieving (1 Cor. xiv. 22). What do they then in a Christendom? It may indeed be answered, that in it are unbelievers still; yet not in the sense in which St. Paul uses the word, for he would designate not the positively unbelieving, not those that in heart and will are estranged from the truth, but the negatively, and that, because the truth has never yet sufficiently accredited itself to them; the ἀπιστοι, not the ἀπειθεῖς. Signs are not for these last, the positively unbelieving, since, as we have seen, they will exercise no power over those who harden themselves against the truth;—such will resist or evade them as surely as they will resist or evade every other witness of God's presence in the world;—but for the unbelieving who are such by no

fault of their own, for them to whom the truth is now coming, for the first time. And if not even for them now,—as they exist, for instance, in a heathen land,—we may sufficiently account for this by the fact, that the Church of Christ, with its immense and evident superiorities of all kinds over every thing with which it is brought in contact, and some portions of which superiority every man must recognize, is itself now the great witness and proof of the truth which it delivers. That truth, therefore, has no longer need to vindicate itself by an appeal to something else; but the position which it has won in the very forefront of the world is itself its vindication now, and suffices to give it a first claim on every man's attention.

And then further, all that we might ourselves beforehand presume from the analogy of external things leads us to the same conclusions. We find all beginning to be wonderful—to be under laws different from, and higher than, those which regulate ulterior progress. Thus the powers evermore at work for the upholding the natural world would have been manifestly insufficient for its first creation; there were other which must have presided at its birth, but which now, having done their work, have fallen back, and left it to its ordinary development. The multitudinous races of animals which people the earth, and of plants which clothe it, needed infinitely more for their first production than suffices for their present upholding. It is only according to the analogies of that which thus everywhere surrounds us, to presume that it was even so with the beginnings of the spiritual creation—the Christian Church. It is unquestionably so in the beginning of that new creation in any single heart. Then, in the regeneration, the strongest tendencies of the old nature are overborne; the impossible has become possible, in some measure easy; by a mighty wonder-stroke of grace the polarity in the man is shifted; the flesh, that was the positive pole, has become the negative, and the spirit, which was before the negative, is henceforth the positive. Shall we count it strange,

then, that the coming in of a new order, not into a single heart, but into the entire world—a new order bursting forcibly through the bonds and hindrances of the old, should have been wonderful? It had been inexplicable if it had been otherwise. The son of Joseph might have lived and died, and done no miracles: but the Virgin-born, the Son of the Most Highest, Himself the middle point of all wonder,—for Him to have done none, herein, indeed, had been the most marvellous thing of all.

But this new order, having not only declared but constituted itself, having asserted that it is not of any inevitable necessity bound by the heavy laws of the old, henceforth submits itself in outward things, and for the present time, to those laws. All its true glory, which is its inward glory, it retains; but these powers, which are not the gift—for Christ Himself is the gift—but the signs of the gift, it foregoes. “Miracles,” says Fuller, “are the swaddling clothes of the infant Churches;” and, we may add, not the garments of the full grown. They were as the proclamation that the king was mounting his throne; who, however, is not proclaimed every day, but only at his accession; when he sits acknowledged on his throne, the proclamation ceases. They were as the bright clouds which gather round, and announce the sun at his first appearing: his mid-day splendour, though as full, and indeed fuller, of light and heat, knows not those bright heralds and harbingers of his rising. Or they may be likened to the temporary framework on which the arch is rounded, which framework is taken down so soon as that is completed. That the Church *has had* these wonders,—that its first birth was, like that of its wondrous Founder, wonderful,—of this it preserves a record and attestation in its Scriptures of truth. The miracles recorded there live for the Church; they are as much present witnesses for Christ to us now as to them who actually saw them with their eyes. For they were done once, that they might be believed always; that we, having in the Gospels the lively representation of

our Lord portrayed for us, might as surely believe that He was the ruler of nature, the healer of the body, the Lord of life and of death, as though we had actually ourselves seen Him allay a storm, or heal a leper, or raise one dead.

Moreover, a very large proportion of the later miracles presented to our belief bear inward marks of spuriousness. The miracles of Scripture,—and among these, not so much the miracles of the Old Covenant as the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, being the miracles of that highest and latest dispensation under which we live,—we have a right to consider as normal, in their chief features at least, for all future miracles, if such were to continue in the Church. The details, the local colouring, might be different, and there would be no need to be perplexed at such a difference appearing; yet the later must not, in their inner spirit, be totally unlike the earlier, or they will carry the sentence of condemnation on their front. They must not, for instance, lead us back under the bondage of the senses, while those other were ever framed to release from that bondage. They must not be aimless and objectless, fantastic freaks of power, while those had every one of them a meaning and distinct ethical aim,—were bridges by which Christ found access from men's bodies to their souls,—manifestations of his glory, that men might be drawn to the glory itself. They must not be ludicrous and grotesque, saintly jests, while those were evermore reverend and solemn and awful. And lastly, they must not be seals and witnesses to aught which the conscience, enlightened by the Word and Spirit of God,—whereunto is the ultimate appeal, and which stands above the miracle, and not beneath it,—protests against as untrue (the innumerable Romish miracles which attest transubstantiation), or as error largely mingling with the truth (the miracles which go to uphold the whole Romish system), those other having set their seal only to the absolutely true. Miracles with these marks upon them, we are bound, by all which we hold most sacred, by all which the Word of God has taught us, to reject

and to refuse. It is for the reader, tolerably acquainted with the Church-history of the Middle Ages, to judge how many of its miracles will, if these tests be acknowledged and applied, at once fall away, and, failing to fulfil these primary conditions, will have no right even to be considered any more.\*

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\* The results are singularly curious, which sometimes are come to through the following up to their first sources the biographies of eminent Romish saints. Tholuck has done this in regard of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier; and to him (*Verm. Schrift.* pp. 50-57) I am mainly indebted for the materials of the following note.—There are few, perhaps, who have been surrounded with such a halo of wonders as the two great pillars of the order of the Jesuits, Loyola and Xavier. Upwards of two hundred miracles of Loyola were laid before the Pope, when his canonization was in question,—miracles beside which, those of our Lord shrink into insignificance. If Christ by his word and look rebuked and expelled demons, Ignatius did the same by a letter. If Christ walked once upon the sea, Ignatius many times in the air. If Christ, by his shining countenance and glistening garments, once amazed his disciples, Ignatius did it frequently, and, entering into dark chambers, could, by his presence, light them up as with candles. If the sacred history tells of *three* persons whom Christ raised from the dead, the number which Xavier raised exceeds all count. In like manner the miracles of his great namesake of Assisi rivalled, when they did not leave behind, those of Christ. The author of the *Liber Conformatum*, writing of him less than a century after his death, brings out these conformities of the Master and the servant: *Hic sicut Jesus aquam in vinum convertit, panes multiplicavit, et de naviculis in medio fluctuum maris miraculose immotu, per se a terrâ abductâ, docuit turbas audientes in littore. Huic omnis creatura quasi ad nutum videbatur parere, ac si in ipso esset status innocentiae restitutus. Et ut cætera taceam: cæcos illuminavit; surdos, claudos, paralyticos, omnium infirmatum generibus laborantes curavit, leprosos mundavit; dæmones effugavit; captivos eripuit; naufragis succurrerit; et quam plures mortuos suscitavit* (Gieseler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 355). But to return to Ignatius, and the historic evidence of *his* miracles. Ribadeneira, from early youth his scholar and companion, published, fifteen years after his death, that is in 1572, a life of his departed master and friend; which book appeared again in 1587, augmented with many additional circumstances communicated by persons who had lived in familiar intercourse with Ignatius while living, and who had most intimate opportunities of being acquainted with all the facts of his life (gravissimi viri et Ignatio valde familiares). Now it is sufficiently remarkable that neither in the first, nor yet in the second so greatly enlarged and corrected edition, does the slightest trace of a miracle appear.

Very interesting is it to observe how the men who in some sort fell in with the prevailing tendencies of their age (for, indeed, who escapes them?), yet did ever, in their higher moods, with truest Christian insight, witness against those very

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On the contrary, the biographer enters into a lengthened discussion of the reasons why it did not please God that any signal miracles should be wrought by this eminent servant of his:—*Sed dicat aliquis, si hæc vera sunt, ut profecto sunt, quid causæ est, quam ob rem illius sanctitas minus est testata miraculis, et, ut multorum Sanctorum vita, signis declarata, virtutumque operationibus insignita? Cui ego; Quis cognovit sensum Domini, aut quis conciliarius ejus fuit? Ille enim est qui facit mirabilia magna solus, propterea illius tantummodo infinita virtute fieri possunt, quæcumque aut naturæ vim aut modum excedunt. Et ut solus ille hæc potest efficere, ita ille solus novit, quo loco, quo tempore miracula et quorum precibus facienda sint. Sed tamen neque omnes sancti viri miraculis excelluerunt; neque qui illorum aut magnitudine præstiterunt, aut copiâ, idecirco reliquos sanctitate superarunt. Non enim sanctitas ejusque signis, sed caritate testimanda est.* Two years before the appearance of the second edition of this work, that is, in 1585, Maffei, styled the Jesuit Livy, published at Rome his work, *De Virtutib[us] et Morib[us] S. Ignatii Loyolæ Libri tres*; and neither in this is aught related of the great founder of the Order, which deserves the name of a miracle, however there may be here some nearer approach to such than in the earlier biography—remarkable intimations, as of the death or recovery of friends, glimpses of their beatified state, ecstatic visions in which Christ appeared to him; and even of these, the list is introduced in a half-apologetic tone, which shows that he has by no means thoroughly convinced himself of the historic accuracy of those things which he is about to relate: *Non panca de eodem admirabilia prædicantur, quorum aliqua nobis hoc loco expondere visum est.*

But with miracles infinitely more astounding and more numerous the Romish church has surrounded his great scholar, Francis Xavier. Miracles were as his daily food; to raise the dead was as common as to heal the sick. Even the very boys who served him as catechists received and exercised a similar power of working wonders. Now there are, I believe, no historic documents whatever, laying claim to an ordinary measure of credibility, which profess to vouch for these. And in addition to this, we have a series of letters written by this great apostle to the heathen, out of the midst of his work in the far East (*S. Francisci Xaverii Epistolarum Libri tres*; Pragæ, 1750); letters which prove him indeed to have been one of the discreetest, as he was one of the most fervent, preachers of Christ that ever lived, and which are full of admirable hints for the missionary; but of miracles wrought by himself, of miracles which the missionary may expect in aid of his work, there occurs not a single word.

tendencies by which they, with the rest of their contemporaries, were more or less borne away. Thus was it with regard to the over-valuing of miracles, the counting them the only evidences of an exalted sanctity. Against this what a continual testimony in all ages of the Church was borne; not, indeed, sufficient to arrest the progress of an error, into which the sense-bound generations of men only too naturally fall, yet showing that the Church herself was ever conscious that the holy life was in the sight of God of higher price than the wonderful works—that love is the greatest miracle of all—that to overcome the world, this is the greatest manifestation of the power of Christ in his servants.\* Upon this subject one passage from Chrysostom, in place of the many that might be quoted, and even that greatly abridged, must suffice.† He is rebuking the faithful, that now, when their numbers were so large, they did so little to leaven the world, and this, when the Apostles, who were but twelve, effected so much; and he puts aside the excuse, “But they had miracles at command,” not with the answer, “So have we;” but in this language: “How long shall we use their miracles as a pretext for our sloth? ‘And what was it then,’ you say, ‘which made the Apostles so great?’ I answer, This, that they contemned money; that they trampled on vain-glory; that they renounced the world. If they had not done thus, but had been slaves of their passions, though they had raised a thousand dead, they would not merely have profited nothing, but would have been counted as impostors. What miracle did John, who reformed so many cities, of whom yet it is expressly said, that he did no sign? And thou, if thou hadst thy choice, to raise the dead in the name of Christ, or thyself to die for his name,

\* See for instance, Augustine's admirable treatment of the subject, *Enarr. in Ps. cxxx.*, beginning with the words: Ergo sunt homines, quos delectat miraculum facere, et ab eis qui profecerunt in Ecclesiâ miraculum exigunt, et ipsi qui quasi profecisse sibi videntur, talia volunt facere, et putant se ad Deum non pertinere, si non fecerint.

† *Hom. xlvi. in Matth.*

which wouldest thou choose? Would it not be plainly the latter? And yet that were a *miracle*, and this is but a *work*. And if one gave thee the choice of turning all grass into gold, or being able to despise all gold as grass, wouldest thou not choose the last? And rightly; for by this last wouldest thou most effectually draw men to the truth. This is not my doctrine, but the blessed Paul's: for when he had said, 'Covet earnestly the best gifts,' and then added, 'yet show I unto you a more excellent way,' he did not adduce miracles, but love, as the root of all good things."\*

Few points present greater difficulties than the attempt to fix accurately the moment when these miraculous powers were withdrawn from the Church, and it entered into its permanent state, with only its present miracles of grace and the record of its past miracles of power; instead of having actually going forward in the midst of it those miracles of power as well, with which it first asserted itself in the world. This is difficult, because it is difficult to say at what precise moment the Church was no longer in the act of *becoming*, but contemplated in the mind of God as now actually *being*; when to the wisdom of God it appeared that He had adequately confirmed the word with signs following, and that this framework might be withdrawn from the completed aréh, these props and

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\* Neander (*Kirch. Gesch.* vol. iv. pp. 255-257) quotes many like utterances coming from the chief teachers of the Church, even in the midst of the darkness of the ninth century. Thus Odo of Clugny relates of a pious layman, whom some grudged should be set so high, seeing that he wrought no miracles, how that once detecting a thief in the act of robbing him, he not merely dismissed him, but gave him all that which he would wrongfully have taken away, and adds, Certe milii videtur, quod id magis admiratione dignum sit, quam si furem rigere in saxy duritiem fecisset. And Neander (vol. v. pp. 477, 606) gives ample testimonies to the same effect from writers of lives of saints, and from others, in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. One of these confesses indeed that it is a long line of miracles which is chiefly looked for from them (quod maxime nunc exigitur ab iis qui sanctorum vitas describere volunt). There is a beautiful passage on the superior worth of charity in St. Bernard, *Serm. xlvi. 8, in Cant.*

strengthenings of the infant plant might safely be removed from the hardier tree.\*

That their retrocession was gradual, that this mighty tide of power should have ebbed only by degrees,† this was what was to be looked for in that spiritual world which, like God's natural world, is free from all harsh and abrupt transitions, in which each line melts imperceptibly into the next. We can conceive the order of retrocession to have been in this way; that divine power which dwelt in all its fulness and intensity in Christ, was first divided among his Apostles, who, therefore, individually brought forth fewer and smaller works than their Lord. It was again from them further subdivided among the ever-multiplying numbers of the Church, who, consequently, possessed not these gifts in the

\* This image is Chrysostom's, who draws it out at length (*Hom. xlvi. in Inscript. Act. Apostt.*): "As therefore a husbandman, having lately committed a young tree to the bosom of the earth, counts it worthy, being yet tender, of much attention, on every side fencing it round, protecting it with stones and thorns, so that neither it may be torn up by the winds, nor harmed by the cattle, nor injured by any other injury; but when he sees that it is fast rooted and has sprung up on high, he takes away the defences, since now the tree can defend itself from any such wrong; thus has it been in the matter of our faith. When it was newly planted, while it was yet tender, great attention was bestowed on it on every side. But after it was fixed and rooted and sprung up on high, after it had filled all the world, Christ both took away the defences, and for the time to come removed the other strengthenings. Wherefore at the beginning He gave gifts even to the unworthy, for the early time had need of these helps to faith. But now He gives them not even to the worthy, for the strength of faith no longer needs this assistance." Gregory the Great (*Hom. xxix. in Evang.*) has very nearly the same image: *Hæc [signa] necessaria in exordio Ecclesiæ fuerunt. Ut enim fides cresceret, miraculis fuerat nutrienda: quia et nos cum arbusta plantamus, tamdiu eis aquam infundimus, quousque ea in terrâ jam convaluisse videamus; et si semel radicem fixerint, in rigando cessamus.*

† Thus Origen (*Con. Cels. ii. 46*) calls the surviving gifts in the Church *vestiges* (*ἰχνη*) of former powers; and again, ii. 8, he speaks of them as *ἰχνη καὶ τύποι γε μετάζοντα*. There is a curious passage in Abelard (*Sermo de Joan. Bapt.* p. 967), directed against the claimants to the power of working miracles in his day. Though he does not mention St. Bernard, it is difficult to think that he has not him in his eye.

same intensity and plenitude as did the twelve. Yet must it always be remembered that these receding gifts were ever helping to form that which should be their own substitute; that if they were waning, that which was to supply their room was ever waxing,—that they only waned as that other waxed; the flower dropped off only as the fruit was being formed. If those wonders of a first creation have left us, yet this was not so, till they could bequeath in their stead the standing wonder of a Church,\* itself a wonder, and embracing manifold wonders in its bosom.† For are not the laws of the spiritual world, as they are ever working in the midst of us, a continual wonder? What is the new birth in Baptism, and the communion of Christ's body and blood in the Holy Eucharist, and the life of God in the soul, and a kingdom of heaven in the world, what are these but every one of them wonders?‡ wonders in this like the wonders of

\* Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 8) : Quisquis adhuc prodigia, uti eredat, inquirit, magnum est ipse prodigium, qui mundo credente, non eredat.

† Coleridge, in his *Literary Remains*, vol. iv. p. 260, on this matter expresses himself thus: "The result of my own meditations is, that the evidence of the Gospel, taken as a total, is as great for the Christians of the nineteenth century as for those of the apostolic age. I should not be startled if I were told it were greater. But it does not follow that this equally holds good of each component part. An evidence of the most cogent clearness, unknown to the primitive Christians, may compensate for the evanescence of some evidence which they enjoyed. Evidences comparatively dim have waxed into noon-day splendour, and the comparative wane of others once effulgent is more than indemnified by the *synopsis τοῦ παντός* which we enjoy, and by the standing miracle of a Christendom commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilised world."

‡ The wonder of the existence and subsistence of a Church in the world is itself so great, that Augustine says strikingly and with a deep truth, that to believe, or not to believe, the miracles is only choosing an alternative of wonders. If you do not believe the miracles, you must at least believe this miracle, that the world was converted without miracles (*si miraculis non creditis, saltem huic miraculo credendum est, mundum sine miraculis fuisse conversum*). Cf. *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 8, 1. And on the relation of the helps to faith, the witnesses of God's presence in the midst of his Church, which severally we have, and which the early Christians had, he says (*Serm. ccliv. 8*) : Apostoli

ordinary nature, as distinguished from those which accompany a new in-coming of power, that they are under a law which we can anticipate; that they conform to an absolute order, and one the course of which we can understand;—but ~~not~~ therefore the less divine.\* How meanly do we esteem

Christum præsentem videbant: sed toto orbe terrarum diffusam Ecclesiam non videbant: videbant caput, et de corpore eredebant. Habemus vices nostras: habemus gratiam dispensationis et distributionis nostræ: ad credendum certissimis documentis tempora nobis in una fide sunt distributa. Illi videbant caput, et eredebant de corpore: nos videmus corpus, et eredamus de capite. Let me here observe that Augustine's own judgment in respect of the continuance of miracles in the Church appears to have varied at different times of his life. In an early work of his, *De Vera Religione*, xxv. 47, he certainly denies their continuance: Cum enim Ecclesia Catholica per totum orbem diffusa atque fundata sit, nec miracula illa in nostrum tempus durare permissa sunt, ne animus semper visibilia quereret. In his *Retractations*, however (i. 13, 25), he expressly withdraws this statement, or limits it to such miracles as those which at the first accompanied the baptism of the faithful; and *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 8, he enumerates at great length miracles, chiefly or exclusively miracles of healing, which he believed to have been wrought in his own time, and coming more or less within his own knowledge.

\* Gregory the Great (*Hom. xxix. in Evang.*): Sancta quippe Ecclesia quotidie spiritaliter facit quod tunc per Apostolos corporaliter faciebat. Nam sacerdotes ejus cum per exorcismi gratiam manum credentibus imponunt, et habitate malignos spiritus in eorum mente contradicunt, quid aliud faciunt, nisi daemonia ejiciunt? Et fideles quique qui jam vitæ veteris secularia verba derelinquent, sancta autem mysteria insonant, Conditoris sui laudes et potentiam, quantum prævalent, narrant, quid aliud faciunt, nisi novis linguis loquuntur? Qui dum bonis suis exhortationibus malitiam de alienis cordibus auferunt, serpentes tollunt. Et dum pestiferas suasiones audiunt, sed tamen ad operationem pravam minime pertrahuntur, mortiferum quidem est quod libunt, sed non eis nocebit. Qui quoties proximos suos in opere bono, infirmari conspiciunt, dum eis tota virtute concurrunt, et exemplo suæ operationis illorum vitam roborant qui in propriâ actione titubant, quid aliud faciunt, nisi super ægros manus imponunt, ut bene habeant? Quæ nimurum miracula tanto majora sunt, quanto spiritalia, tanto majora sunt, quanto per hæc non corpora sed animæ suscitantur. . . . Corporalia illa miracula ostendunt aliquando sanitatem, non autem faciunt: hæc vero spiritalia, quæ aguntur in mente, virtutem vitæ non ostendunt, sed faciunt. Illa habere et mali possunt; istis autem perfrii nisi boni non possunt. . . . Nolite ergo, fratres carissimi, amare signa quæ possunt cum reprobis haberi communia, sed hæc quæ modo diximus, caritatis atque pietatis miracula amate; quæ tanto securiora sunt, quanto et occulta; et de quibus apud Dominum

of a Church, of its marvellous gifts, of the powers of the coming world which are working within it, of its Word, of its Sacraments, when it seems to us a small thing that in it men are new born, raised from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, the eyes of their understanding enlightened, and their ears opened, unless we can tell of more visible and sensuous wonders as well. It is as though the heavens should not declare to us the glory of God, nor the firmament show us his handiwork, except at some single moment such as that when the sun was standing still upon Gibeon, and the moon in Ajalon.

While then it does not greatly concern us to know *when* this power was withdrawn, what does vitally concern us is, that we suffer not these carnal desires after miracles, as though they were necessarily saints who had them, and they but imperfect Christians who were without them, as though the Church were incomplete and spiritually impoverished which could not show them, to rise up in our hearts; being, as they are, ever ready to rise up in the natural heart of man, to which power is so much dearer than holiness. There is no surer proof than the utterance of feelings such as these, that the true glory of the Church is hidden from our eyes—no sadder sign that some of its outward trappings and ornaments have caught our fancy; and not the fact that it is all-glorious within, taken possession of our hearts and minds. It is, indeed, an ominous token as regards our own spiritual estate, for it argues the little which we ourselves have known of the miracles of grace, when *they* seem to us poor and pale, and only the miracles of power have any attraction in our eyes.

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eo major fit retributio, quo apud homines minor est gloria. See too on these greater wonders of the Church, Augustine, *Serm. lxxxviii. 8*; and Origen (*Con. Cels. ii. 48*) finds in them, in these wonders of grace which are ever going forward, the fulfilment of the promise that those who believed should do greater things than Christ Himself (John xiv. 12). Bernard too, *In Ascen. Dom. Serm. i.*, has some beautiful remarks on the better miracles, which are now evermore finding place in Christ's Church.

## CHAPTER V.

### *THE ASSAULTS ON THE MIRACLES.*

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#### 1. THE JEWISH.

A RIGID monotheistic religion like the Jewish left but one way of escape from the authority of miracles, which once were acknowledged to be indeed miracles, and not mere collusions and sleights of hand. There remained nothing to say, but that which we find in the N. T. the adversaries of the Lord continually *did* say, namely, that these works were works of hell: “This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils”\* (Matt. xiii. 24. cf. Mark iii. 22-27; Luke xi. 15-22). We have our Lord’s own answer to the deep malignity of this assertion; his appeal, namely, to the whole tenor of his doctrine and his miracles—whether they were not altogether for the overturning of the kingdom of evil,—whether such a lending of power to Him on the part of Satan would not be wholly inconceivable, since it were merely and altogether suicidal. For though it would be quite intelligible that Satan should bait his hook with *some* good, should array himself as an angel of light, and do for a while deeds that might appear as deeds of light, that so he might the better carry through some mighty delusion.—

“Win men with honest trifles, to betray them  
In deepest consequence,”

just as Darius was willing that a small detachment of his army should perish, that so the mighty deceit which Zopyrus

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\* They regarded Him as planum in signis (Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iii. 6; cf. *Apolog.* xxi.). This charge is dressed out with infinite blasphemous additions in the later Jewish books (see Eisenmenger, *Entdeckt. Judenth.* vol. i. p. 148, seq.).

was practising against Babylon might succeed,\*— yet the furthering upon his part of a lasting, unvarying, unrelaxing assault on his own kingdom is quite unintelligible. That kingdom, thus in arms against itself, could not stand, but must have an end. He who came, as all his words and his deeds testified, to “destroy the works of the devil,” could not have come armed with *his* power, and helped onward by his aid. It is not of a pact with the Evil One which this tells, but of One mightier than that Evil, who has entered with power into his stronghold, and who, having bound him, is now spoiling his goods. Our Lord does in fact repel the accusation, and derive authority to his miracles, not from the power which they display, however that may be the first thing that brings them into consideration, but from the ethical ends which they serve. He appeals to every man’s conscience, whether the doctrine to which they bear witness, and which bears witness to them, be not from above, and not from beneath: and if so, then the power with which He accomplished them could not have been lent Him from beneath, since the kingdom of lies would never so contradict itself, as seriously to help forward the establishment of the kingdom of truth.†

There is, indeed, at first sight a difficulty in the argument which our Saviour draws from the oneness of the kingdom of Satan—namely, that it seems the very idea of this kingdom, that it should be an anarchy, blind rage and hate not merely against God, but each part of it warring against every other part. And this is most deeply true, that hell is as much in arms against itself as against heaven; neither does our Lord deny that *in respect of itself* that kingdom is infinite contradiction and division: only He asserts that *in relation to the kingdom of heaven* it is at one: there is one life in it and one soul in opposition to that. Just as a nation or kingdom may embrace within itself infinite parties, divisions, discords,

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\* Herodotus, iii. 155.

† Eusebius (*Dem. Evang.* iii. 6) makes much of this argument.

jealousies, and heart-burnings; yet, if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations*, have lost its sense of unity; when it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes. To the Pharisees He says: “This kingdom of evil subsists; by your own confession it does so; it cannot therefore have denied the one condition of its existence, which is, that it should not lend its powers to the overthrowing of itself, that it should not side with its own foes; my words and works declare that I am its foe, it cannot therefore be siding with Me.”

This accusation brought against the miracles of Christ, that they were done by the power of an evil magic, the heathen also sometimes used; but evidently having borrowed this weapon from the armoury of the Jewish adversaries of the faith.\* And in their mouths, who had no such earnest idea of the kingdom of God upon one side and the kingdom of evil on the other, and of the fixed limits which divide the two, who had peopled the intermediate space with middle powers, some good, some evil, some mingled of both, the accusation was not at all so deeply malignant as in the mouth of a Jew. It was little more than a stone which they found conveniently at hand to fling, and with them is continually passing over into the charge that those works were wrought by trick—that they were conjuror’s arts; the line between

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\* See a curious passage, Origen, *Con. Cels.* i. 68. cf. also i. 6; ii. 49; viii. 9; Augustine, *De Cons. Evang.* i. 9-11; Jerome, *Brev. in Psal.* lxxxi. in fine; Arnobius, *Adv. Gen.* i. 43, who brings in this as one of the calumnies of the heathen against the Lord: Magus fuit, clandestinis artibus omnia illa perfecit: Aegyptiorum ex adytis angelorum potentium nomina et remotas furatus est disciplinas; cf. also 53. This charge of fetching his magical skill from Egypt, which Celsus in like manner takes up (Origen, *Con. Cels.* i. 28, 38; see also Eusebius, *Dem. Evang.* iii. 6), betrays at once the Jewish origin of the accusation. It is evermore repeated in Jewish books. Egypt, say they, was the natural home of magic, so that if the magic of the world were divided into ten parts, Egypt would possess nine; and there, even as the Christian histories confess, Jesus resided two years (Eisenmenger, *Entdeckt. Judenth.* vol. i. pp. 149, 166).

the two charges is continually disappearing. The heathen, however, had a method more truly their own of evading the force of the Christian miracles, which is now to consider.

## 2. THE HEATHEN. (CELSUS, HIEROCLES, PORPHYRY.)

A religion like the Jewish, which, besides God and the Angels who were in direct and immediate subordination to Him, left no spirits conceivable but those in rebellion against Him, the absolutely and entirely evil, this, as has been observed, allowed no choice, when once the miracle was adjudged not to be from God, but to attribute it to Satan. There was nothing between; it was from heaven, or, if not from heaven, from hell. But it was otherwise in the heathen world, and with the “gods many” of polytheism. So long as these lived in the minds of men, the argument from the miracles was easily evaded. For what did they prove at the uttermost with regard to their author? What but this, that *a* god, it might be one of the higher, or it might be one of the middle powers, the *δαιμones*, the intermediate deities, was with him? What was there, men replied, in this circumstance, which justified the demand of an absolute obedience upon their parts? Wherfore should they yield exclusive allegiance to Him that wrought these works? The gods had spoken often by others also, had equipped them with powers equal to or greater than those claimed by his disciples for Jesus; yet no man therefore demanded for them that they should be recognized as absolute lords of the destinies of men. Esculapius performed wonderful cures; Apollonius went about the world healing the sick, expelling demons, raising the dead; Aristeas disappeared from the earth in as marvellous a way as the Author of the Christian faith: yet no man built upon these wonders a superstructure such as that which the Christians built upon the wonders of Christ.\*

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\* The existence of false cycles of miracles should no more cast a suspicion upon all, or cause to doubt those which present themselves

Thus Celsus, as we learn from more than one passage in Origen's reply, brings forward now the mythic personages of antiquity, now the magicians of a later date; though apparently with no very distinct purpose in his mind, but only with the feeling that somehow or other he can play them off against the divine Author of our religion, and undermine his claims to the allegiance of men. For it certainly remains a question how much credence he gave himself to the miracles which he adduced; Origen\* charges him with not believing them; whether, sharing the almost universal scepticism of the educated classes of his day, he did not rather mean that all should fall, than that all should stand, together. Hierocles again, governor of Bithynia, who is accused of having been a chief instigator of the cruelties under Diocletian,—and who, if the charge be just, wielded arms of unrighteousness on both hands against the Christian faith, the persecutor's sword and the libeller's pen,—followed in the same line. His book we know from the extracts in the answer of Eusebius, and the course of his principal arguments. From this answer it appears that, having recounted various miracles wrought, as he affirms, by Apollonius, he proceeds thus: "Yet do we not account him who has done such things for a god, only for a man beloved of the gods: while the Christians, on the con-

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with marks of the true, than the appearance of a parhelion forerunning the sun cause us to deny that he was travelling up from beneath the horizon, for which rather it is an evidence. The false money passes, not because there is nothing better, and therefore all have consented to receive it, but because there is a good money, under colour of which the false is accepted. Thus is it with the longing which has existed "at all times and in all ages after some power which is not circumscribed by the rules of ordinary visible experience, but which is superior to these rules and can transgress them." The mythic narrations in which such longings find an apparently historic clothing and utterance, so far from being eyed with suspicion, should be most welcome to the Christian inquirer. The enemies of the faith will of course parade these shadows, in the hopes of making us believe that our substance is a shadow also; but they are worse than simple who are cozened by so palpable a fraud.

\* *Con. Cels. iii. 22.*

trary, on account of a few insignificant wonder-works, proclaim their Jesus for a God.”\* He presently, it is true, shifts his arguments, and no longer allows the miracles, denying only the conclusions drawn from them; but rather denies that they have any credible attestation: in his blind hate setting them in this respect beneath the miracles of Apollonius, which this “lover of truth,” for under the name of “Philalethes” he writes, declares to be far more worthily attested.

This Apollonius (of Tyana in Cappadocia), whose historical existence there seems no reason to call in question, was probably born about the time of the birth of Christ, and lived as far as into the reign of Nerva, A.D. 97. Save two or three isolated notices of an earlier date, the only record which we have of him is a *Life*, written by Philostratus, a rhetorician of the second century, and professing to be founded on contemporary documents, yet everywhere betraying its unhistoric character. It is in fact a philosophic romance, in which the revival and re-action of paganism in the second century is portrayed. Yet I do not believe that *Life* to have been written with any purpose directly hostile to the new faith, but only to prove that they of the old religion had their mighty wonder-worker as well. It was composed indeed, as seems to me perfectly clear, with an eye to the life of our Lord; the parallels are too remarkable to have been the effect of chance;† in a certain sense also in emulation and rivalry; yet not in hostile opposition, not as implying this was the Saviour of men, and not that; nor yet, as some of Lucian’s works, in a mocking irony of the things which are

\* In the same way Arnobius (*Adv. Gen.* i. 48) brings in the heathen adversary saying it is idle to make these claims (frustra tantum arrogas Christo) on the score of the miracles, when so many others have done the like.

† See, for instance, upon the raising of the widow’s son, the parallel miracle which I have adduced from the life of Apollonius. The above is Baur’s conclusion in his instructive little treatise, *Apollonius von Tyana und Christus*, Tübingen, 1832.

written concerning the Lord.\* This later use which has often been made of the book, must not be confounded with its original purpose, which was different. The first, I believe, who *so* used it, was Charles Blount,† one of the earlier English Deists. And passing over some other insignificant endeavours to make the book tell against revealed religion, endeavours in which the feeble hand, however inspired by hate, yet wanted strength and skill to launch the dart, we come to Wieland's *Agathodæmon*, in which neither malice nor dexterity was wanting, and which, professing to explain upon natural grounds the miracles of Apollonius, yet unquestionably points throughout at one greater than the wonder-worker of Tyana, with a hardly suppressed *de te fabula narratur* running through the whole.‡

The arguments drawn from these parallels, so far as they were adduced in good faith and in earnest, have, of course, perished with the perishing of polytheism from the minds of men. Other miracles can no longer be played off against Christ's miracles; the choice which remains now is between these and none.

\* His *Philopseudes*, for instance, and his *Vera Historia*. Thus only the latter half of this judgment of Huet's (*Dem. Evang.* prop. ix. 147) seems to me to be true: *Id spectasse imprimis videtur Philostratus, ut invalescentem jam Christi fidem ac doctrinam deprimeret, opposito hoc omnis doctrinæ, sanctitatis, ac mirificæ virtutis fane simulacro. Itaque ad Christi exemplar hanc expressit effigiem, et pleraque ex Christi Jesu historiâ Apollonio accommodavit, ne quid ethnici Christianis invidere possent.*

† In his now scarce translation, with notes, of *The two first books of Philostratus*, London, 1680, with this significant motto from Seneca, *Cum omnia in incerto sint, fave tibi, et crede quod mayis.*

‡ The work of Philostratus has been used with exactly an opposite aim by Christian apologists, namely, to bring out, by comparison with the best which heathenism could offer, the surpassing glory of Christ. Cudworth, in his *Intellectual System*, iv. 15, occupies himself at a considerable length with Apollonius. Here may probably have been the motive to Blount's book, which followed only two years after the publication of Cudworth's great work. Henry More, too, in his *Mystery of Godliness*, iv. 9-12, compares at large the miracles of Christ with those of Apollonius.

## 3. THE PANTHEISTIC. (SPINOZA.)

These two classes of assailants of the Scripture miracles, the Jewish and the heathen, allowed the miracles themselves to stand unquestioned as facts, but either challenged their source, or denied the consequences drawn from them by the Church. Not so the pantheistic deniers of the miracles, who assailed them not as being of the devil, not as insufficient proofs of Christ's absolute claims of lordship; but cut at their very root, denying that any miracle was possible, since it was contrary to the idea of God. For these opponents of the truth Spinoza may be said, in modern times, to bear the word; the view is so connected with his name, that it will be well to hear the objection as he has uttered it. That objection is indeed only the necessary consequence of his philosophical system. Now the first temptation on making acquaintance with that system is to contemplate it as a mere and sheer atheism; and such has ever been the ordinary charge against it; nor, in studying his works is it always easy to persuade oneself that it is anything else, or that the various passages in which Spinoza himself assumes it as something different, are more than inconsequent statements, with which he seeks to blind the eyes of others, and to avert the odium of this charge of atheism from himself. And yet atheism it is not, nor is it even a *material*, however it may be a *formal*, pantheism. All justice requires it to be acknowledged that he does not bring down and resolve God into nature, but rather takes up and loses nature in God. It is only man whom he submits to a blind fate, and for whom he changes, as indeed for man he does, all ethics into physics. But the idea of freedom, as regards God, is saved; since, however, he affirms Him immanent in nature and not transcending it, this is only because He has Himself chosen these laws of nature as the one unchangeable manner of his working, and constituted them in his wisdom so elastic, that they shall prove, under

every circumstance and in every need, the *adequate* organs and servants of his will. He is not bound to nature otherwise than by that, his own will; the laws which limit Him are of his own imposing; the necessity which binds Him to them is not the necessity of any absolute fate, but of the highest fitness. Still, however, Spinoza does affirm such a necessity, and thus excludes the possibility of any revelation, whereof the very essence is that it is a new beginning, a new unfolding by God of Himself to man, and especially excludes the miracle, which is itself at once the accompaniment, and itself a constituent part, of a revelation.

It would not be profitable to say more than a few words here on the especial charges\* which he brings against the miracle, as lowering, and unworthy of, the idea of God. They are but an application to a particular point of the same charges which he brings against all revelation, namely, that to conceive any such is to dishonour, and cast a slight upon, God's great original revelation of Himself in nature and in man; a charging of that with such imperfection and incompleteness, as that it needed the author of the world's laws to interfere in aid of those laws, lest they should prove utterly inadequate to his purposes.\* And thus, as regards the miracle in particular, he finds fault with it as a bringing in of disorder into that creation, of which the only idea worthy of God is that of an unchangeable order; it is a making of God to contradict Himself, for the law which was violated by the miracle is as much God's law as the miracle which violated it. The answer to this objection has been already antici-

\* *Tract. Theol. Pol.* vi.: Nam cum virtus et potentia naturæ sit ipsa Dei virtus et potentia, leges autem et regulæ naturæ ipsa Dei decreta, omnino credendum est, potentiam naturæ infinitam esse, cjuisque leges adeo latas, ut ad omnia quæ et ab ipso divino intellectu concipiuntur, se extendant; alias enim quid aliud statuitur, quam quod Deus naturam adeo impotentem ereaverit, ejusque leges et regulas adeo steriles statuerit, ut sæpe de novo ei subvenire cogatur, si eam conservatam vult, et ut res ex voto succedant, quod sane a ratione alienissimum esse existimo?

pated ; it has been already urged that the miracle is not a discord in nature, but the coming in of a higher harmony ; not disorder, but instead of the order of earth, the order of heaven ; not the violation of law, but that which continually, even in this natural world, is taking place, the comprehension of a lower law in a higher ; in this case the comprehension of a lower natural, in a higher spiritual law ; with only such modifications of the lower as are necessarily consequent upon this.

When, further, he charges the miracle with resting on a false assumption of the position which man occupies in the universe, with flattering the notion that nature is to serve him, not he to bow to nature, it cannot be denied that it does rest on this assumption. But this were only a charge which would tell *against* it, supposing that true, which so far from being truth, is indeed his first great falsehood of all, namely, the substitution of a God of *nature*, in place of a God of *men*. If God be indeed only or chiefly the God of nature, and not in a paramount sense the God of grace, the God of men, if nature be indeed the highest, and man only created as furniture for this planet, it were indeed absurd and inconceivable that the higher should serve, or give place to, or fall into the order of, the lower. But if, rather, man is "the crown of things," the end and object of all, if he be indeed the vicegerent of the Highest, the image of God, this world and all else that belongs to it being but a school for the training of men, only having a worth and meaning when so considered, then that the lower should serve, and, where need is, give way to the interests of the highest, were only beforehand to be expected.\*

Here, as is so often the case, something much behind the

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\* They are the truly wise, he says (*Traet. Theol. Pol. vi.*), who aim not at this, ut natura iis, sed contra ut ipsi naturae pareant, utpote qui certe sciunt, Deum naturam dirigere prout ejus leges universales, non autem prout humanae naturae particulares leges exigunt, adeoque Deum non solius humani generis, sed totius naturae rationem habere.

miracle, something much earlier in men's view of the relations between God and his creatures, has already determined whether they should accept or reject it, and this, long before they have arrived at the consideration of this specific matter.

#### 4. THE SCEPTICAL. (HUME.)

While Spinoza rested his objection to the miracles on the ground that the everlasting laws of the universe left no room for such, and while the form therefore which the question in debate assumed in his hands was this, Are miracles (objectively) *possible*? Hume, the legitimate child and pupil of the empiric philosophy of Locke, started his objection in altogether a different shape, namely, in this, Are miracles (subjectively) *credible*? He is, in fact, the sceptic, which,—taking the word in its more accurate sense, not as a *denier* of the truths of Christianity, but a *doubter* of the possibility of arriving at any absolute truth,—Spinoza is as far as possible from being. To this question Hume's answer is in the negative; or rather, in the true spirit of that philosophy which leaves every thing in uncertainty, ‘It is always more probable that a miracle is false than true; it can therefore in no case prove any thing else, since it is itself incapable of proof;’—which thus he proceeds to show. In every case, he observes, of conflicting evidence we weigh the evidence for and against the alleged facts, and give our faith to that side upon which the evidence preponderates, with an amount of confidence proportioned, not to the whole amount of evidence in its favour, but to the balance which remains after subtracting the evidence against it. Thus, if the evidence on the side of A might be set as=20, and that on the side of B as=15, then our faith in A would remain  $20 - 15 = 5$ ; we giving our faith upon the side on which a balance of probabilities remains, and only to the extent of that balance. But every miracle, he goes on to say, *is* a case of conflicting evidence. In its favour is the evidence of the attesting witnesses; against

it the testimony of all experience which has gone before, and which witnesses for an unbroken order of nature. When we come to balance these against one another, the only case in which the evidence for the miracle could be admitted as prevailing would be that *in which the falseness or error of the attesting witnesses would be a greater miracle than the miracle which they affirm.* But no such case can occur. The evidence against a miracle having taken place is as complete as can be conceived; even were the evidence in its favour as complete, it would only be proof against proof, and absolute suspension of judgment would be the wise man's part. But further, the evidence in favour of the miracle never makes claim to any such completeness. It is always more likely that the attesting witnesses were deceived, or were willing to deceive, than that the miracle took place. For, however many they may be, they are always but few compared with the multitudes who attest a fact which excludes their fact, namely, the uninterrupted succession of a natural order in the world; and those few, moreover, submitted to divers warping influences, from which the others, nature's witnesses, are altogether free. Therefore there is no case in which the evidence for any one miracle is able to outweigh the *a priori* evidence which is against all miracles. Such is the conclusion at which he arrives. The argument, it will be seen, is sceptical throughout. Ilume does not, like Spinoza, absolutely deny the possibility of a miracle; all he denies is that we can ever be convinced of one. Of two propositions or assertions that *may be* true which has the least evidence to support it; but according to the necessary constitution of our mental being, we must give our adherence to that which presents itself to us with the largest amount of evidence in its favour.

Here again, as on a former occasion, so long as we abide in the region of nature, miraculous and improbable, miraculous and incredible, may be admitted as convertible terms. But once lift up the whole discussion into a higher region, once acknowledge something higher than nature, a kingdom

of God, and men the intended denizens of it, and the whole argument loses its strength and the force of its conclusions. Against the argument from experience which tells against the miracle, is to be set, not, as Hume asserts, the evidence of the witnesses, which it is quite true can in no case itself be complete and of itself sufficient, but this, *plus* the anterior probability that God, calling men to live above nature and sense, would in this manner reveal Himself as the Lord paramount of nature, the breaker through and slighter of the apparitions of sense; *plus* also the testimony which the particular miracle by its nature, its fitness, the glory of its circumstances, its intimate coherence as a redemptive act with the personality of the doer, in Coleridge's words, "its exact accordance with the ideal of a true miracle is the reason," gives to the conscience that it is a divine work. The *moral* probabilities Hume has altogether overlooked and left out of account, and when they are admitted,—dynamic in the midst of his merely mechanic forces,—they disturb and indeed utterly overbear and destroy them. His argument is as that fabled giant, unconquerable so long as it is permitted to rest upon the earth out of which it sprung; but easily destroyed when once it is lifted into a higher world. It is not, as Hume would fain have us to believe, solely an intellectual question; but it is in fact the moral condition of men which will ultimately determine whether they will believe the Scripture miracles or not; this, and not the exact balance of argument on the one side or the other, which will compel this scale or that to kick the beam.

He who already counts it likely that God will interfere for the higher welfare of men, who believes that there is a nobler world-order than that in which we live and move, and that it would be the blessing of blessings for that nobler to intrude into and to make itself felt in the region of this lower, who has found that here in this world we are bound by heavy laws of nature, of sin, of death, which no powers that we now possess can break, yet which must be broken if we are truly

to live,—he will not find it hard to believe the great miracle, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and his declaration as the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead ; because all the deepest desires and longings of his heart have yearned after such a deliverer, however little he may have been able even to dream of so glorious a fulfilment of those longings. And as he believes that greatest miracle, so will he believe all other miracles; which, as satellites of a lesser brightness, naturally wait upon that, clustering round and drawing their lustre from the central brightness of that greatest. He, upon the other hand, to whom this world is all, who has lost all sense of a higher world with which it must once have stood connected, who is disturbed with no longings for any thing nobler than it gives, to whom “the kingdom of God” is an unintelligible phrase, he will resist, by an intellectual theory if he can, or if not by that, by instinct, the miracle. Every thing that is in him predisposes him to disbelieve it and the doctrines which it seals. To him who denies thus any *final* causes, who does not believe that humanity is being carried forward under a mightier leading than its own to a certain and that a glorious end, who looks at the history of this world and of man as the history of a bark tempest-tost, with no haven to which it is bound, to him these moral probabilities are no probabilities; and this being so, we should learn betimes how futile it is to argue with men about *our* faith, who are the deniers of all upon which *any* faith can be built.\*

##### 5. THE MIRACLES ONLY RELATIVELY MIRACULOUS.

(SCHLEIERMACHER.)

Another scheme for getting rid of the miraculous element

\* Augustine (*De Util. Cred.* xvi.): *Si enim Dei providentia non præsidet rebus humanis, nihil est de religione satagendum.* See some valuable remarks on Hume and on his position in Mill's *Logic*, vol. ii. p. 187, 2d edit.

in the miracle, and one often united with Spinoza's *a priori* argument against it,\* being brought forward to explain the phenomenon of an apparent miracle, after that has shown that a real one was impossible, has been the following. These works, it has been said, were *relative* miracles,—miracles, in other words, for those in regard of whom they were first done,—as when a savage believes that a telescope has the power of bringing the far instantaneously near,—but no miracles in themselves, being but in truth the anticipation of discoveries in the kingdom of nature, the works of one who having penetrated deeper into her mysteries than the men of his own age, could therefore wield powers which were unknown, and bring about results which were inexplicable, to them.† It must be evident to the least thoughtful, that, however it may be sought to disguise the fact, the miracle does thus become no miracle,‡ and the doer of it can no longer be recognized as one commanding nature in a way specifically different from other men, but only as one who has a clearer or earlier insight than others into her laws and the springs of her power. It is strange that any should ever

\* As by Spinoza himself, *Ep. xxiii.*: *Rogare mihi licet an nos homunciones tantum naturae cognitionem habeamus, ut determinare possimus, quousque ejus vis et potentia se extendit, et quid ejus vim superat?*

† Thus Hase (*Leben Jesu*, p. 108): *Sie sind zwar nothwendig begriffen im Naturzusammenhange, daher nach diesem überall zu forschen ist, aber sie überschritten weit die Kenntniss und Kraft der Zeitgenossen.*

‡ Mirabile, but not miraculum. Augustine's definition in one place (*De Util. Cred.* xvi.), *Miraculum voco quicquid arduum aut insolitum supra spem vel facultatem mirantis appareat*, is plainly faulty; it is the definition of the mirabile, not of the miraculum. Aquinas is more distinct (*Summ. Theol.* I, qu. 110, art. 4): *Non sufficit ad rationem miraculi, si aliquid fiat præter ordinem aliquius naturæ particularis, sic enim aliquis miraculum faceret lapidem sursum projiciendo; ex hoc autem aliquid dicitur miraculum, quod fit præter ordinem totius naturæ creatæ, quo sensu solus Deus facit miracula. Nobis enim non omnis virtus naturæ creatæ nota; cum ergo fit aliquid præter ordinem naturæ creatæ nobis notæ per virtutem creatam nobis ignotam, est quidem miraculum quoad nos, sed non simpliciter.*

have been satisfied with this statement, which is indeed only a decently veiled denial of the miracle altogether.\* For thus it has no longer an eternal significance ; it is no longer a halo which is to surround the head of its worker for ever ; with each enlargement of men's knowledge of nature a star in his crown of glory is extinguished, till at length it fades altogether into the light of common day, nay, rather declares that it was not any more than a deceitful and meteor fire at the best. For it implies a serious moral charge against the doer of these works, if he vents them as wonders, as acts of a higher power than nature's, or allows others so to receive them, when indeed he entirely knows that they are wrought but according to her ordinary laws. It was well enough, according to the spirit in which he was working, for one of the conquerors of the New World to make the Indians, whom he wished to terrify, believe that in his displeasure with them he would at a certain hour darken the moon, when indeed he did but foreknow an eclipse of her orb :† but in the kingdom of truth to use artifices like these were nothing else but by lies to seek to overturn the kingdom of lies.

Schleiermacher‡ endeavours so to guard this view as that it shall not appear an entire denial of the miracles, to dress it out and prevent its nakedness from being seen ; but he does not, in fact, lift himself above it. Christ, he says, had

\* J. Müller (*De Mirac. J. C. Nat. et Necess.* par. ii. p. 1) well characterizes this scheme : Quid vero ? num de miraculorum necessitate ordinamus a notione miraculi tollendâ ? Si enim ex eâ sententiâ mirabilia Christi opera e propriis naturæ viribus secundum hujus legem, at absconditam, orta sunt, certum et constans disserimen hæc inter et illa, quæ quotidie in naturâ fieri videmus, remanet nullum ; omnia fluunt et miscentur ; quæ rerum natura heri gremio suo operuit, aperit hodie ; quæ etiam nunc abscondita sunt, posthaec patetbunt. Si vero, quod hodie miraculum, eras non erit, et hodie non *est*, sed *esse* tantum *videtur*.

† Plutarch (*De Def. Orac. xii.*) mentions exactly the same trick of a Thessalian sorceress. A late writer upon the rule of the Jesuits in Paraguay accuses them of using artifices of the like kind for acquiring and maintaining an influence over their converts.

‡ *Der christl. Glaube*, vol. i. p. 100 ; vol. ii. p. 135.

not merely this deeper acquaintance with nature than any other that ever lived, but stands in a more inward connexion with nature. He is able to evoke, as from her hidden recesses and her most inward sanctuary, powers which none other could; although still powers which lay in her already. These facts, which seem exceptional, were deeply laid in the first constitution of the law; and now, at this turning-point of the world's history, by the providence of God, who had arranged all things from the beginning of the world for the glory of his Son, did at his bidding emerge. Yet single and without analogy as these "wonders of preformation" (for so one has called them) were, they belonged to the law as truly as, when the aloe puts forth its flower, or is said to put it forth, once in its hundred years, it yet does this according to its own innermost nature. For ninety and nine years it would have seemed to men not to be the nature of the plant to flower, yet the flowering of the hundredth year is only the coming out of its truest nature.

We see in this scheme that attempt to reconcile and atone between revelation and science, which was the main purpose of all Schleiermacher's writings. Yet is it impossible to accept the reconciliation which he offers; as it is really made, however the sacrifice may be concealed, altogether at the expense of the miracle—which, in fact, is no miracle, if it lay in nature already, if it was not a new thing, if it was only the evoking of old and latent forces in nature, not the bringing in of the novel powers of a higher world; if the mysterious processes and powers by which those works were brought about, had been only undiscovered hitherto, and not undiscoverable, by the efforts of human inquiry.

Augustine has been sometimes quoted, but altogether unjustly, as maintaining this scheme of the relatively miraculous. It is quite true that, when arguing with the heathen, he does demand why they refuse to give credence to the Scripture miracles, when they believe so much that can in no way be explained by any laws which their experience sup-

plied; and adduces some curious but actual, and some also entirely fabulous, phenomena of the natural world, such as fountains cold by night and hot by day,—others which extinguished a lighted torch, but set on fire an extinguished one,—stones which, once kindled, could not be quenched,—magnets which attracted iron, and other wonders, to which he and they gave credence alike.\* But it is not herein his meaning to draw down the miracles to a level with natural appearances, hitherto unexplained, but capable of and waiting their explanation. Rather in these natural appearances he sees direct interpositions of the Divine Power; he does not reckon that any added knowledge will bring them under laws of human experience, and therefore he lifts them up to a level with the miracles. He did not merge the miracles in nature, but drew up a portion of nature into the region of the miraculous. However greatly as a natural philosopher he may have been here at fault, yet all extenuating of the miracle was far from him; indeed he ever refers it to the omnipotence of God as to its ultimate ground.†

When he affirms that much *seems* to be against nature, but nothing truly is, this may sound at first like the same statement of the miraculous being what it is merely in relation to certain persons and certain stages of our knowledge of this outward world. But it is only in sound that it is similar. He has quite a different thought of nature from any that will allow such to be his meaning. Nature is for him but the outward expression of the will of God; and all which he affirms is, that God never can be contrary to God; that there can be no collision of his wills; that whatever comes in is as true an order, the result of as real a law, as that which gives place to it; which must needs be, since it has come in according to the will of God; which will is itself the highest order, and law, and harmony.‡

\* *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 5.

† *Ibid.* xxi. 7.

‡ See the quotation from Augustine, p. 16. That he had clearly

## 6. THE RATIONALISTIC. (PAULUS.)

The rise of rationalism,—which term I use for convenience sake, and without at all consenting to its fitness, for it is as absurd a misnomer as when in the last century that was called *free-thinking*, which was assuredly to end in the slavery of all thought,—seems to have been in this manner. It may be looked at as an escape from the conclusions of mere Deists concerning Christ's Person and his Word, upon the part of some, who had indeed abandoned the true faith of the Church concerning its Head, yet were not prepared to give up the last lingering vestiges of their respect for Holy Scripture and for Him of whom Scripture testified. They with whom this system grew up could no longer believe the miracles, they could no longer believe the great miracle in which all other are easily included, a Son of God, in the Church's sense of the term. They, too, were obliged to fall in with the first principles of the infidel adversary, that any who professed to accomplish miracles was either self-deceived or a deceiver, even as those who recorded such as having happened must be regarded as standing in the same dilemma. But what if it could be shown that Christ never professed to do any miracles, nor the sacred historians to record any? if it could be shown that the sacred narratives, rightly read, gave no countenance to any such assumption, and that it was only the lovers of, and cravers after, the marvellous, who had found any miracles there;—the books themselves having been intended to record merely natural events? Were not this an

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in his eye the essential property of a miracle, that it should be the coming in of a new power of God into nature, and distinguished this broadly from the relatively miraculous, is plain from innumerable passages such as this (*De Civ. Dei*, x. 16): *Miracula, . . . non ea dico quæ intervallis temporum occultis ipsius mundi caussis, verum tamen sub divinâ providentiâ constitutis et ordinatis monstrosa contingunt, quales sunt inusitati partus animalium, et cœlo terrâque rerum insolita facies.*

escape from the whole difficulty? The *divine*, it is true, in these narratives would disappear; that, however, they did not desire to save; that they had already given up: but the *human* would be vindicated; the good faith, the honesty, the entire credibility of the Scripture historians, would remain unimpeached. And in Christ Himself there would be still that to which they could look up with reverence and love; they could still believe in Him as the truthful founder of a religion which they shrunk from the thought of renouncing altogether. No longer being, as the Church declared Him, the worker of wonders, clothed with power from on high, nor professing to be that which He was not, as the blasphemers affirmed, He would still abide for them, the highest pattern of goodness which the world had yet seen, as He went up and down the world, healing and blessing, though with only the same means at his command as were possessed by other men.

Their attempt was certainly a bold one. To suffer the sacred text to stand, and yet to find no miracles in it, did appear a hopeless task. For this, it must be always remembered, altogether distinguishes this system from later mythic theories, that it *does* accept the N. T. as entirely historic; it does appeal to the word of Scripture as the ground and proof of its assertions; its great assertion being that the Evangelists did not intend to relate miracles, but ordinary facts of everyday experience, works done by Jesus, now of friendship and humanity, now of medical skill, now, it might be, of chance and good fortune, or other actions which from one cause or other seemed to them of sufficient significance to be worth recording. Thus Christ, they say, did not heal an impotent man at Bethesda, but only detected an impostor; He did not change water into wine at Cana, but brought in a new supply of wine when that of the house was exhausted; He did not multiply the loaves, but, distributing his own and his disciples' little store, set an example of liberality, which was quickly followed by others who had like stores, and in

this way there was sufficient for all ; He did not cure blindness otherwise than any skilful oculist might do it ;—which indeed, they observe, is clear ; for with his own lips He declared that He needed light for so delicate an operation—“I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work” (John ix. 4) ; He did not walk on the sea, but on the shore ; He did not tell Peter to find a stater in the fish’s mouth, but to catch as many fish as would sell for that money ; He did not raise Lazarus from the dead, but guessed from the description of his disease that he was only in a swoon, and happily found it as He had guessed.

This scheme, which many had already tried here and there, but which first appeared full blown and consistently carried through in the *Commentary* of Dr. Paulus, published in 1800, did not long survive in its first vigour. It perished under blows received from many and opposite quarters ; for, not to speak of a reviving faith in the hearts of many, that God could do more than man could understand, even the children of this world directed against it the keenest shafts of their ridicule. Every philologist, nay, every man who believed that language had any laws, was its natural enemy, for it stood only by the violation of all these laws. Even the very advance of unbelief was fatal to it, for in it there was a slight lingering respect to the Word of God ; moved by which respect it sought forcibly to bring that Word into harmony with its theory, as a better alternative than the renouncing of the authority of that Word altogether. But when men arose, who did not shrink from the other alternative, who had no desire to hold by that Word at all, then there was nothing to hinder them from at once coming back to the common-sense view of the subject, one which no art could long succeed in concealing, namely that the Evangelists did at any rate *intend* to record supernatural events. Those to whom the Scriptures were *no* authority were, thus far at least, more likely to interpret them aright, that they were not under the temptation

to twist and pervert them, so to bring them into apparent accordance with their own systems.

This scheme of interpretation, thus assailed from so many sides, and itself merely artificial, quickly succumbed. And now, even in the land of its birth, it has entirely perished; on the one side a deeper faith, on the other a more rampant unbelief, have encroached on, and wholly swallowed up, the territory which it occupied for a while. It is indeed so little the form in which an assault on Revelation will ever again clothe itself, and may be so entirely regarded as one of the cast-off garments of unbelief, now despised and trodden under foot even of those who once glorified themselves in it, that I have not alluded, save very slightly and passingly, to it in the body of my book. Once or twice I have noticed its curiosities of interpretation, its substitutions, as they have been happily termed, of *philological* for *historical* wonders. The reader who is curious to see how Dr. Paulus and his compeers arrived at the desired result of exhausting the narrative of its miraculous element, will find specimens in the notes upon *The feeding of the five thousand*, and *The stater in the fish's mouth*.

#### 7. THE HISTORICO-CRITICAL. (WOOLSTON, STRAUSS.)

The last assault upon the miracles is that which may be not unfitly termed the historico-critical. It affirms that they are so full of contradictions, psychological and other improbabilities, discrepancies between the accounts of one Evangelist and another, that upon close handling they crumble to pieces, and are unable to maintain their ground as history. Among the English divines of the last century, Woolston especially addressed himself in this way to the undermining the historic credit of these narratives. He was brought to this evil work in a singular way, and abides a mournful example of the extremes to which spite and mortified vanity may carry a weak man, though, as all testimonies concur in acknowledg-

ing, at one time of estimable conversation, and favourably known for his temperate life, his charity to the poor, and other evidences of an inward piety. Born in 1669, and educated at Cambridge, where he became a fellow of Sidney, he first attracted unfavourable notice by a certain crack-brained enthusiasm for the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, which he carried to all lengths. Whether he owed this to the works of Philo and Origen, or whether he only strengthened and nourished an already existing predilection by the study of their writings, is not exactly clear; but it had become a sort of "fixed idea" in his mind. At first, although just offence was taken at more than one publication of his, in which his allegorical system was carried out at the expense apparently of the historic truth of the Scripture, yet, as it was not considered that he meant any mischief, as it was not likely that he would exert any very wide influence, he was suffered to follow his own way, unvisited by any serious censures from the higher authorities of the Church. Meeting, however, with opposition in many quarters, and unable to carry the clergy with him, he broke out at last in unmeasured invectives against them, and in a virulent pamphlet\* styled them "slaves of the letter," "Baal-priests," "blind leaders of the blind," and was on account of this pamphlet deprived of his fellowship (1721).

From this time it seemed as if an absolute fury possessed him. Not merely the Church, but Christianity itself, was the object of his attack. Whether his allegorical system of interpretation had indeed ended, as it was very likely to do, in depriving him of all faith in God's Word, and he retained his professed veneration for its spiritual meaning only that he might, under shelter of that, more securely advance to the assault of its historical foundations, or whether he did still

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\* In his *Letter to the Rev. Dr. Bennett upon this question, Whether the Quakers do not the nearest of any other sect resemble the primitive Christians in principle and practices.* By Aristobulus. London, 1720.

retain this in truth, it was now at any rate only subordinate and subservient to his purpose of revenge. To these he was ready to offer up every other consideration. When, then, in that great controversy which was raging in the early part of the last century, the defenders of revealed religion entrenched themselves behind the miracles, as defences from which they could never be driven, as irrefragable proofs of the divine origin of Christianity, Woolston undertook, by the engines of his allegorical interpretation, to dislodge them from these also, and with this aim published his notorious *Letters on the Miracles*.\* It is his manner in these to take certain miracles

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\* These six *Letters*, first published as separate pamphlets between 1727-29, had an immense circulation, and were read with the greatest avidity. Voltaire, who was in England just at the time of their publication, says that thirty thousand copies of them were sold, and that large packets of them were forwarded to the American colonies. In the copy I am using, the different letters range from the third to the sixth edition, and this almost immediately after their first publication. Indeed, Swift, in his lines on his own death, written 1731, speaks of something much more than this, and quite consents with Voltaire's account of the immense popularity which they enjoyed. He makes Lintot, the bookseller, say,—

"Here's Woolston's tracts, the *twelfth* edition,  
"Tis read by every politician :  
The country members when in town  
To all their boroughs send them down :  
You never met a thing so smart ;  
The courtiers have them all by heart ;" &c.

Their circulation was so great, and their mischief so wide, that above sixty answers were published within a very short period. Gibson, then Bishop of London, addressed five pastoral letters to his diocese against them; and other chief divines of England, as Sherlock, Pearce, Smallbrooke, found it needful to answer them. Of the replies which I have seen, Smallbrooke's (Bishop of St. David's) *Vindication of our Saviour's Miracles*, 1729, is the most learned and the best. But one cannot help being painfully struck upon this and other occasions with the exceeding poverty and feebleness of the anti-deistical literature of England in that day of need; the low grounds which it occupies; the little enthusiasm which the cause awakened in its defenders. With regard to Woolston himself, the paltry shifts with which he sought to evade the consequences of his blasphemy,—and there is an infinite meanness in the way in which he professes, while blaspheming against the works of Christ, to be only assailing them in

which Christ did, or which were wrought in relation of Him, two or three in a letter; he then seeks to show that, understood in their literal sense, they contain such extravagances, contradictions, and the like, that none can suppose Christ actually to have done them; while neither could the Evangelists, as honest men, men who had the credit of their Lord at heart, have intended to record them as having been actually wrought, or desired us to receive them otherwise than as allegories, spiritual truths clothed in the garb of historic events. The enormous difference between himself and those early Church writers, to whom he appeals, and whose views he professes to be only re-asserting,—a difference of which it is impossible that he could have been ignorant,—is this: they said, This history, being real, has also a deeper ideal sense; he upon the contrary, Since it is impossible that this history can be real, therefore it must have a spiritual significance. They build upon the establishment of the historic sense, he upon its ruins.\*

When he would fain utter grosser blasphemies than in his own person he dares, or than would befit the position which he has assumed from whence to assault Revelation, he introduces a Jewish Rabbi, and suffers him to speak without restraint, himself only observing, “This is what an adversary might say; to these accusations we Christians expose our-

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the letter that he may vindicate them in the spirit,—this and other such poor evasions failed to protect him from the pains and penalties of the law. He was fined twenty-five pounds for each of his *Letters*, sentenced to be imprisoned for a year, and was not to be released till he could find sureties for his good behaviour. These he was not able to procure, and he died in prison in 1731.

\* Their canon was ever this of Gregory the Great (*Hom. xl. in Evang.*): Tunc namque allegoriae fructus suaviter carpitur, cum prius per historiam in veritatis radice solidatur; and they abound in such earnest warnings as this of Augustine's: Ante omnia tamen, fratres, hoc in nomine Dei admonemus, . . . ut quando auditis exponi Sacras Scripturas narrantes quæ gesta sunt, prius illud quod lectum est creditatis sic gestum quomodo lectum est, ne subtracto fundamento rei gestæ, quasi in aëre quæretis ædificare. Compare what he says on the history of Jonah, *Ep. cii. qu. vi. 33.*

selves, so long as we cleave to the historic letter; we only can evade their force by forsaking that, and holding fast the allegorical meaning alone." I shall not (as it is not needful) offend the Christian reader by the reproduction of any of his coarser ribaldry, which has sufficient cleverness to have made it mischievous enough; but will endeavour to show by a single example the manner in which he seeks to make weak points in the Scripture narratives. He is dealing with the miracle of the man sick of the palsy, who was let through the broken roof of the house where Jesus was, and thereupon healed (Mark ii. 1-12). But how, he demands, should there have been such a crowd to hear Jesus preach at Capernaum, where He was so well known, and so little admired? And then, if there was that crowd, what need of such urgent haste? it was but waiting an hour or two, and the multitude would have dispersed; "I should have thought their faith might have worked patience." Why did not Jesus tell the people to make way? would they not have done so readily, since to see a miracle was the very thing they wanted? How should the pulleys, ropes, and ladder have been at hand to haul the sick man up? How strange that they should have had hatchets and other tools ready at hand, to break through the spars and rafters of the roof; and stranger still, that the good man of the house should have endured, without a remonstrance, his property to be so injured! How did those below escape without hurt from the falling tiles and plaster? And if there were a door in the roof, as some, to mitigate the difficulty, tell us, why did not Jesus go up to the roof, and there speak the healing word, and so spare all this trouble and damage and danger?

But enough;—it is evident that this style of objection could be infinitely multiplied in regard of any history. There is always something else that might have been done besides the thing that was done. It is after this taking to pieces of the narrative, this triumphant showing, as he affirms, that it cannot stand in the letter, that he proceeds, as a sort of salvo,

to say it may very well stand in its spirit, as an allegory and symbol of something else; and that so, and so only, it was intended. This is what he offers by way of this higher meaning in the present case: By the palsy of this man is signified “a dissoluteness of morals and unsteadiness of faith and principles, which is the condition of mankind at present, who want Jesus’ help for the cure of it.” The four bearers are the four Evangelists, “on whose faith and doctrine mankind is to be carried unto Christ.” The house to the top of which he is to be carried is “the intellectual edifice of the world, otherwise called Wisdom’s house.” But “to the sublime sense of the Scriptures, called the top of the house, is man to be taken; he is not to abide in the low and literal sense of them.” Then if he dare to “open the house of wisdom, he will presently be admitted to the presence and knowledge of Jesus.”\*

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\* *Fourth Discourse on the Miracles*, pp. 51-67. Strauss’s own judgment of his predecessor in this line very much agrees with that given above. He says, “Woolston’s whole presentation of the case veers between these alternatives. If we are determined to hold fast the miracles as actual history, then they forfeit all divine character, and sink down into unworthy tricks and common frauds. Do we refuse, on the other hand, to let go the divine in these narrations, then must we, with the sacrifice of their historic character, understand them only as the setting forth, in historic guise, of certain spiritual truths; for which, indeed, the authority of the chiefest allegorists in the Church, as Origen and Augustine and others, may be adduced;—yet so, that Woolston imputes falsely to them the intention of thrusting out, as he would do, the literal interpretation by the allegorical altogether; when indeed they, a few instances on Origen’s part being excepted, are inclined to let both explanations stand, the one by the other. Woolston’s statement of the case may leave a doubt to which of the two alternatives that he sets over against one another, he with his own judgment inclines. If one calls to mind, that before he came forward as an opponent of Christianity as received in his day, he occupied himself with allegorical interpretations of the Scripture, one might regard this as the opinion which was most truly his own. But on the other hand, all that he can adduce of incongruities in the literal sense of the miracle histories is brought forward with such one-sided zeal, and so colours the whole with its mocking tone, that one must rather conjecture that the Deist seeks only, by urging the allegorical sense, to secure his own rear, that so he may the more

Not very different is Strauss's own method of proceeding. He wields the same weapons of destructive criticism, thinking to show how each history will crumble at his touch, will resolve into a heap of improbabilities, which no one can any longer maintain. It needs not to say that he is a more accomplished adversary than Woolston, with far ampler resources at command,—more, if not of his own, yet of other men's learning; inheriting as he does all the negative criticism of the last hundred years, of an epoch, that is, which has been sufficiently fruitful in this kind. Here indeed is in great part the secret of the vast sensation which his work for a season caused: all that was scattered up and down in many books he has brought together<sup>4</sup> and gathered into a single focus; all which other men had spoken faintly and with reserve, he with a greater boldness has spoken out; he has dared to give utterance to all which was trembling upon the lips of numbers, but which, from one cause or another, they had shrunk from openly avowing. Yet as regards the treatment of the miracles,—for with that only we have now to do,—there are differences between him and Woolston. He unites in his own person the philosophical and the critical assailant of these; for he starts from the philosophic ground of Spinoza, that the miracle is impossible, since the laws of nature are the only and the necessary laws of God and of his manifestation; and he then proceeds to the critical examination of the Gospel miracles in detail; but of course in each case to the trial of that which is already implicitly tried and condemned. Thus, if he is ever at a loss, if any of them give him trouble, if they oppose a too stubborn resistance to the powerful solvents which he applies, threatening to stand in despite of all, he immediately falls back on his philosophic ground, and exclaims, “But if we admit it was thus, then we

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boldly let himself loose on the literal meaning” (*Leben Jesu*, 3d edit. vol. i. p. 14). There is a very accurate and carefully written account of Woolston, and his life and writings, in Lechler, *Geschichte des Englischen Deismus*, pp. 289-311.

should have here a miracle, and we have started from the first principle, that such is inconceivable." This mockery in every case he repeats, trying *them* one by one, which have all been condemned by him beforehand in the gross.

. There is, too, this further difference, that while Woolston professed to consider the miracles as the conscious clothing of spiritual truth, allegories devised artificially, and, so to speak, in cold blood, for the setting forth of the truths of the kingdom, Strauss gives them a freer birth and a somewhat nobler origin. They are the halo of glory with which the Infant Church gradually and without any purposes of deceit clothed its Founder and its Head. His mighty personality, of which it was livingly conscious, caused it ever to surround Him with new attributes of glory. All that men had ever craved and longed for—deliverance from physical evil, dominion over the crushing powers of nature, victory over death itself,—all that had ever in a lesser measure been attributed to any,—they lent in larger abundance, in unrestrained fulness, to Him whom they felt greater than all. The Church in fact made its Christ, and not Christ his Church.\*

With one only observation I will pass on, not detaining the reader any longer from more pleasant and more profitable portions of the subject. It is this,—that here, as so often, we find the longings and cravings of men after a redemption, in the widest sense of that word, made to throw suspicion upon Him in whom these longings and cravings are affirmed to have been satisfied. But if we believe a divine life stirring at the root of our humanity, the depth and universality of such longings is a proof rather that they were meant some day to find their satisfaction, and not always to be mere hopes and dreams; and if so, in whom, but in Him whom we preach and believe—in whom, but in Christ? What other beside Him could, with the slightest show of reason,

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\* See the very remarkable chapter, anticipating so much of modern speculation on this subject, in Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 6.

be put forward as the fulfiller of the world's hopes, the realizer of the world's dreams? If we do *not* believe in this divine life, nor in a divine leading of our race, if we hold a mere brutal theory about man, it were then better altogether to leave discussing miracles and Gospels, which indeed have no meaning for, as they can stand in no relation to, us.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *THE APOLOGETIC WORTH OF THE MIRACLES.*

A MOST interesting question remains; namely this, What place should they who are occupied with marshalling and presenting the evidences of Revelation ascribe to the miracles? what is the service which they may render here? The circumstances have been already noticed which were sufficient to hinder them from taking a very prominent place in the early apologies for Christianity.\* The Christian miracles had not as yet sufficiently extricated themselves from the multitude of false miracles, nor was Christ sufficiently discerned and distinguished from the various wonder-workers of his own and of past ages; and thus, even if men had admitted his miracles to be true and godlike, they would have been hardly nearer to the acknowledging of Christianity as the one faith, or to the accepting of Christ as “the way, the truth, and the life.”

A far more important position has been assigned them in later times, especially during the last two centuries; and the tone and temper of modern theology abundantly explains the greater prominence, sometimes, I believe, the undue, because the exclusive, prominence, which in this period they have assumed. The apologetic literature of this time partook, as was inevitable, in the general depression of all its theology. There is no one, I think, who would now be satisfied with the general tone and spirit in which the defences of

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\* Thus, in the *Apologies* of Justin Martyr, they are scarcely made use of at all. It is otherwise indeed with Arnobius, who (*Adv. Gen.* i. 42) lays much stress on them. Speaking of the truth of Christianity and of Christ's mission, he says, Nulla major est comprobatio quam gestarum ab eo fides rerum, quam virtutum,— and then appeals through ten eloquent chapters to his miracles.

the faith, written during the two last centuries, and beginning with the memorable work of Grotius,\* are composed. Much as this book and others of the same character contain of admirable, yet in well nigh all that great truth of the Italian poet seems to have been forgotten,

“They struggle vainly to preserve a part,  
Who have not courage to contend for all.”

These apologists would seem very often to have thought that Deism was best to be resisted by reducing Christianity to a sort of revealed Deism. As men that had renounced the hope of defending all, their whole endeavour was to save something; and when their pursuers pressed them hard, they were willing to delay the pursuit by casting to them as a prey much that ought to have been the dearest to themselves. They have been well compared to men, who should cry “Thieves and robbers!” and were yet themselves all the while throwing out of the windows the most precious things of the house. And thus it sometimes happened that the good cause suffered quite as much from its defenders as its assailants: for that enemies should be fierce and bitter, this was only to be looked for; but that friends, those in whose keeping was the citadel, should be timid and half-hearted and ready for a compromise, if not for a surrender, this was indeed an augury of ill. Now this, which caused so much to be thrown greatly out of sight, as generally the deeper mysteries of our faith, which brought about a slight of the inner arguments for the truth of revelation, caused the argument from the miracles to assume a disproportionate importance. A value too exclusive was set on them; they were rent away from the truths for which they witnessed, and which witnessed for them,—only too much like seals torn off from the document, which at once *they* rendered valid, and which in return gave importance to them. And thus, in this unnatural

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\* *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ.*

isolation, separated from Christ's person and doctrine, the whole burden of proof was laid on them. *They* were the apology for Christianity, the reason which men were taught they should give for the faith which was in them.\*

It is not hard to see the motives which led to this. Men wanted an *absolute* demonstration of the Christian faith,—one which, objectively, should be equally good for every man: they desired to bring the matter to the same sort of proof as exists for a problem in mathematics or a proposition in logic. And consistently with this we see the whole argument cast exactly into the same forms of definitions, postulates, axioms, and propositions.† Yet was not the state of mind which made men desire either to find for themselves, or to furnish for others, proofs of this nature, altogether a healthy one. It was plain that *their* faith had become very much an external historic one, who thus eagerly looked round for outward evidences, and found a value only in such; instead of turning in upon themselves as well, for evidence that they had “not followed cunningly devised fables,” and saying, “We *know* the things which we believe,—they are to us truer than aught else can be, for we have the witness of the Spirit for their truth. We have found these things to be true, for they have come to us in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.” In place of such an appeal to those mighty influences which Christ's words and doctrine exercise on

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\* I include, in the proofs drawn from the miracles, those drawn from the O.T. prophecies,—for it was only *as miracles* (*miracula præscientiæ*, as the others are *miracula potentiæ*), that these prophecies were made to do service and arrayed in the forefront of this battle; as by the learned and acute Huet, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, in which the fulfilment of prophecy in the person of Jesus of Nazareth is altogether the point round which the whole argument turns, as he himself in the *Preface*, § 2, declares.

† For example, by Huet in his work referred to above. He claims for the way of proof upon which he is entering that it is the safest, and has the precision, and carries the conviction, of a geometrical proof (*Praefatio*, § 2): *Utpote quæ constet hoc genere demonstrationis, quod non minus certum sit quam demonstratio quævis geometrica.*

every heart that receives them, to their transforming, transfiguring power, to the miracles of grace which are the heritage of every one who has believed to salvation, in place of urging on the gainsayers in the very language of the Lord, “ If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God” (John vii. 17), this all as vague and mystical (instead of being seen to be, as it truly was, the most sure and certain of all) was thrown into the background. Men were afraid to trust themselves and their cause to evidences like these, and would know of no other statement of the case than this barren and hungry one:—Christianity is a divine revelation, and this the miracles which accompanied its promulgation prove.

What must first be found fault with in this is the wilful abandonment of such large regions of proof, which the Christian apologist ought triumphantly to have occupied as his proper domain—the whole region, mainly and chiefly, of the inner spiritual life; his foregoing of any appeal to the mysterious powers of regeneration and renewal, which are ever found to follow upon a true affiance on Him who is the Giver of this faith, and who has pledged Himself to these very results in those who rightly receive it.

To these proofs he might at least have ventured an appeal, when he was seeking not to convince an unbeliever, but, as would be often his aim, to carry one that already believed round the whole circle of the defences of his position, to make him aware of the relative strength of each, to give him a scientific insight into the grounds on which his faith rested. Here, at any rate, the appeal to what he had himself known and tasted of the powers of the world to come, might well have found room. For, to use the words of Coleridge,\* “ Is not a true, efficient conviction of a moral truth, is not *the creating of a new heart*, which collects the energies of a man’s

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\* *The Friend*, vol. iii. Essay ii.

whole being in the focus of the conscience, the one essential miracle, the same and of the same evidence to the ignorant and to the learned, which no superior skill can counterfeit, human or demoniacal ; is it not emphatically that leading of the Father, without which no man can come to Christ ; is it not that implication of doctrine in the miracle, and of miracle in the doctrine, which is the bridge of communication between the senses and the soul ;—that predisposing warmth which renders the understanding susceptible of the specific impressions from the history, and from all other outward seals of testimony ?” And even were the argument with one who had never submitted himself to these blessed powers, and to whose experience therefore no like appeal could be made, yet even for him there is the outward utterance of this inward truth, in that which he could not deny, save as he denied or was ignorant of everything, which would make him one to be argued with at all,—the fact, I mean, of a Christendom —the standing miracle of a Christendom “commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilized world,”— the mighty changes which this religion of Christ has wrought in the earth,—the divine fruits which it everywhere has borne, —the new creation which it has everywhere brought about,— the way in which it has taken its place in the world, not as a forcible intruder, but finding all that world’s pre-established harmonies ready to greet and welcome it, ready to give it play and room,—philosophy, and art, and science practically confessing that only under it could they attain their highest perfection, that in something they had all been dwarfed and stunted and incomplete till it came. Little as it wears of the glory which it ought, yet it wears enough to proclaim that its origin was more than mundane ; surely from a Christendom, even such as it shows itself now, it is fair to argue back to a Christ such as the Church receives as the only adequate cause. It is an oak which from no other acorn could have unfolded itself into so tall and stately a tree.

It is true that in this there is an abandoning of the at-

tempt to put the proof of Christianity into the same form as that of a proposition in an exact science. There is no more the claim made of giving it that kind of certainty. But this, which may seem at first sight a loss, is indeed a gain; for the argument for all which as Christians we believe, is in very truth not logical and single, but moral and cumulative; and the attempt to substitute a formal proof, where the deepest necessities of the soul demand a moral, is one of the most grievous shocks which the moral sense can receive, as it is one, too, of the most fruitful sources out of which unbelief has sprung. Few who have had books of evidences constructed on this scheme put into their hands, but must painfully remember the shock which they suffered from their perusal,—how it took them, it may be, some time to recover the healthy tone of their minds, and how, only by falling back upon what they themselves had felt and known of the living power of Christ's words and doctrine in their own hearts, could they deliver themselves from the injurious influences, the seeds of doubt and of misgiving, which these books had now, for the first time perhaps, sown in their minds. They must remember how they asked themselves, in deep inner trouble of soul: “Are these indeed the grounds, and the only grounds, upon which the deep foundations of my spiritual life repose? is this all that I have to answer? are these, and no more, the reasons of the faith that is in me?” And then, if at any moment there arose a suspicion that some link in this chain of outward proof was wanting, or that any one would not bear all the weight which was laid upon it,—and men will be continually tempted to try the strength of that to which they have trusted all,—there was nothing to fall back upon, with which to scatter and put to flight suspicions such as these. And that such should arise, at least in many minds, were inevitable; for how many points, as we have seen, are there at which a suspicion may intrude. Is a miracle possible? Is a miracle provable? Were the witnesses of these miracles competent? Did they

not too lightly admit a supernatural cause, when there were adequate natural ones which they failed to note? These works may have been good for the eye-witnesses, but what are they for me? And these doubts and questionings might be multiplied without number. Happy is the man, and he only is happy, who, if the outworks of his faith are at any time thus assailed, can betake himself to an impregnable inner citadel, from whence in due time to issue forth and repossess even those exterior defences, who can fall back on those inner grounds of belief, in which there can be no mistake, the testimony of the Spirit, which is above and better than all.\*

And as it is thus with him, who entirely desiring to believe, is only unwillingly disturbed with doubts and suggestions, which he would give worlds to be rid of for ever, so on the other hand the expectation that by arguments thrown apparently into strict syllogistic forms there is any compelling to the faith one who does not wish to believe, is absurd, and an expectation which all experience contradicts. All that he is, and all that he is determined to be, has bribed him to an opposite conclusion. Rather than believe that a miracle has taken place, a miracle from the upper world, and connected with precepts of holiness, to which precepts he is resolved to yield no obedience, he will take refuge in any the most monstrous supposition of fraud, or ignorance, or folly, or collusion. If no such solution presents itself, he will wait for such, rather than accept the miracle, with the hated adjunct of the truth which it confirms. In what different ways the same miracle of Christ wrought upon different spectators! He raised a man from the dead; here was the same outward fact for all; but how diverse the effects!—some believed, and some went and told the Pharisees (John xi. 45, 46). Heavenly voices were heard,—and some said it thundered, so dull

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\* See the admirable words of Calvin, *Instit.* i. 7, §§ 4, 5, on the Holy Scripture as ultimately *avtōπιστος*.

and inarticulate were those sounds to them, while others knew that they were voices wherein was the witness of the Father to his own Son (John xii. 28-30).

Are then, it may be asked, the miracles to occupy no place at all in the array of proofs for the certainty of the things which we have believed? On the contrary, a most important place. We should greatly miss them, if they did not appear in sacred history, if we could not point to them there; for they belong to the very idea of a Redeemer, which would remain most incomplete without them. We could not ourselves, without having that idea infinitely weakened and impoverished, conceive of Him as not doing such works; and those to whom we presented Him as a Lord and a Saviour might very well answer, "Strange, that one should come to deliver men from the bondage of nature which was crushing them, and yet Himself have been subject to its heaviest laws, —Himself wonderful, and yet his appearance accompanied by no analogous wonders in nature,—claiming to be the Life, and yet Himself helpless in the encounter with death; however much He promised in word, never realizing any part of his promises in deed; giving nothing in hand, no first fruits of power, no pledges of greater things to come." They would have a right to ask, "Why did He give no signs that He came to connect the visible with the invisible world? why did He nothing to break the yoke of custom and experience, nothing to show men that the constitution which He pretended to reveal has a true foundation?"\* And who would not feel that they had reason in this, that a Saviour who so bore Himself during his earthly life, and his actual daily encounter with evil, would forfeit his right to this name? that He must needs show Himself, if He were to meet the wants of men, mighty not only in word but in work? When we object to the use often made of these works, it is only because they have been forcibly severed from the whole complex of Christ's

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\* Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ*, vol. ii. p. 264.

life and doctrine, and presented to the contemplation of men apart from these; it is only because, when on his head are “many crowns” (Rev. xix. 12), one only has been singled out in proof that He is King of kings and Lord of lords. The miracles have been spoken of as though they borrowed nothing from the truths which they confirmed, but those truths everything from the miracles by which they were confirmed; when, indeed, the true relation is one of mutual interdependence, the miracles proving the doctrines, and the doctrines approving the miracles,\* and both held together for us in a blessed unity, in the person of Him who spake the words and did the works, and through the impress of highest holiness and of absolute truth and goodness, which that person leaves stamped on our souls;—so that it may be more truly said that we believe the miracles for Christ’s sake, than Christ for the miracles’ sake.† Neither when we thus affirm that the miracles prove the doctrine, and the doctrine the miracles, are we arguing in a circle: rather we are receiving the sum total of the impression which this divine revelation is intended to make on us, instead of taking an impression only partial and one-sided.

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\* See Pascal, *Pensées*, 27, *Sur les Miracles*.

† Augustine was indeed affirming the same, when, against the Donatists, and their claims to be workers of wonders, he said (*De Unit. Eccles.* 19): *Quaecunque talia in Catholicâ [Ecclesiâ] fiunt, ideo sunt approbanda, quia in Catholicâ fiunt; non ideo manifestatur Catholica, quia haec in câ fiunt.*

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## THE MIRACLES.

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### 1. THE WATER TURNED INTO WINE.

JOHN ii. 1-11.

“*THIS beginning of miracles*” is as truly an introduction to all other miracles which Christ did, as the parable of the Sower to all other parables which He spoke (Mark iv. 13). No other miracle has so much in it of prophecy, and thus no other would have inaugurated so fitly the whole future work of the Son of God. For that work might be characterized throughout as an ennobling of the common, and a transmuting of the mean; a turning of the water of earth into the wine of heaven. But it will be better not to anticipate remarks, which will find their fitter place when the miracle itself shall have first been considered.

“*And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.*” The “third day” after what? No doubt, the third after that on which Philip and Nathanael, of whose coming to Christ there is mention immediately before (i. 43), had attached themselves to Him. He and his newly-won disciples would have journeyed without difficulty from the banks of Jordan to Cana\* in two days, and might so have been present at the

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\* Among the most felicitous and most convincing of Robinson's slighter rectifications of the geography of Palestine (*Biblical Researches*, vol. iii. pp. 204-208) is that in which he re-instates the true Cana in honours which had long been usurped by another village. In the neighbourhood of Nazareth are two villages, one of which bears the title of Kefr Kenna, and is about an hour and a half N.E. from Nazareth; the other, Kâna el-Jelîl, about three hours' distance, and nearly due north. The former, which has only greater nearness in its favour, is now always shown by the monks and other guides to travellers as the Cana of our history, though the name can only with

"marriage," or, better, "*the marriage festival*," upon the third day after. "*And the mother of Jesus was there.*" The silence of Scripture leaves hardly a doubt that Joseph was dead at the time when the Lord's open ministry began. He is last expressly mentioned on occasion of the Lord's visit as a child to the Temple (Luke ii. 41); which, however, he must for a certain period have overlived (ver. 51). "*And both Jesus was called and his disciples.*" These, invited with their Master, and, no doubt, mainly out of respect to Him, are commonly taken to have been the five whom He had just gathered, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael (Bartholomew?), and the fifth, the Evangelist himself. For St. John is generally considered to have been the second of the two scholars of the Baptist mentioned i. 35, 40, of whom Andrew was the other, both from the particularity with which that calling is narrated, and from this Evangelist's way of concealing his own personality under language such as there is used (cf. xiii. 23; xviii. 15; xix. 26, 35). Only thus can we account for the name of the fifth disciple being past over, while all the others

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difficulty be twisted to the same, the Kefr having first to be dropped altogether, and in Kenna, the first radical changed, and the second left out; while "Kâna el-Jelîl" is word for word the "Cana of Galilee" of Scripture, which exactly so stands in the Arabic version of the N. T. In addition, he decisively proves that the mistake is entirely modern, that only since the sixteenth century Kefr Kenna has thus borne away the honours due rightly to Kâna el-Jelîl. Till then, as he shows by numerous references to a line of earlier travellers and topographers reaching through many centuries, the latter was ever considered as the scene of this first miracle of our Lord. It may have helped to further the mistake, and to win for it an easier acceptance, that it was manifestly for the interest of guides and travellers who would spare themselves fatigue and distance, to accept the other in its room, it lying directly on one of the routes between Nazareth and Tiberias, and being far more accessible than the true. The Cana of the New T. does not occur in the Old, but is mentioned twice by Josephus, who also takes note of it as in Galilee (*Vit.* §§ 16, 64; *Bell. Jud.* i. 17, 5). This addition to the name of the place, occurring as often as it is mentioned, is to be regarded here not as a specification on the part of the Evangelist, but as part of the name, just as we speak of Stoke *by* Nayland, or Burton *on* Trent. The O. T. has only Kanah in Asher (Josh. xix. 28), S.E. of Tyre.

are mentioned. If this assumption is correct, St. John will then have been an eye-witness of the miracle which he relates.\*

None need wonder to find the Lord of life at that festival; for He came to sanctify all life,—to consecrate its times of joy, as its times of sorrow; all experience telling us, that it is times of gladness, such as this was now, which especially need such a sanctifying power and presence of the Lord. In times of sorrow, the sense of God's nearness comes more naturally out: in these it is in danger to be forgotten. He was there, and by his presence there struck the key-note to the whole future tenor of his ministry. He should not be as another Baptist, a wilderness preacher, withdrawing himself from the common paths of men; but his should be at once a harder and a higher task, to mingle with and purify the common life of men, to assert and bring out the glory which was hidden in its every relation.† And it is not, perhaps, without

\* A late tradition makes St. John not merely an eye-witness, but to have been himself the bridegroom at this marriage, who, seeing the miracle which Jesus did, forsook the bride and followed Him. The author of the *Prologue* to St. John, attributed to Jerome, relates: Joannem nubere volentem a nuptiis per Dominum fuisse vocatum, though without more close allusion to this miracle. The Mahometans have received this tradition that John was the bridegroom from the Christians (see D'Herbelot, *Biblioth. Orient.* s. v. *Johanna*). Nicephorus tells the story with this variation, that it was not St. John, but Simon the Cananite, who on this hint followed Jesus; but the *Kavavītys* attached to his name (Matt. x. 4), and which is probably the only foundation for this assumption, as little means "of Cana" as "of Canaan;" which our translators, writing "the Canaanite," as though *Kavavītys* = *Xavavaῖος*, must have assumed. It is rather a term of the same significance as *Zηλωτīs*, the title which elsewhere (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13) is given him. He had belonged to these "zealots," till his zeal for freedom, which before had shown itself in stormy and passionate outbreaks of the natural man, found its satisfaction in Him who came to make free indeed. Yet see what Greswell says (*Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 128 sqq.) against making *ζηλωτīs* = *Kavavītys*.

† Augustine, or another under his name (*Serm. xcii. Appendix*): Nec dedignatus est conversationem hominum, qui usum carnis *excep*-*erat*. Nec secularia instituta contempsit, qui ad hæc venerat corri-*genda*. Interfuit nuptiis, ut concordiæ jura firmaret. Tertullian, in

its significance, that this should have been especially *a marriage*, which He “adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that He wrought.” He foresaw that some hereafter should arise in his Church who would despise marriage, or, if not despise, yet fail to give the Christian family all its dignity and honour.\* These should not find any countenance from Him.†

“*And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith*

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his reckless method of snatching at any argument, finds rather a slighting of marriage than an honouring it in the fact that Christ, who was present at so many festivals, was yet present only at one marriage. Or this at least he will find, that since Christ was present but at one marriage, *therefore monogamy is the absolute law of the new covenant*. His words are characteristic (*De Monogamia*, 9): *Ille vorator et potator homo, prandiorum et cœnarum cum publicanis frequentator, semel apud unas nuptias cœnat, multis utique nubentibus. Totiens enim voluit celebrare eas, quotiens et esse.*

\* Epiphanius (*Heres. lxvii.*); Augustine (*In. Etr. Joh. tract. xix.*): *Quod Dominus invitavit ad nuptias, etiam exceptâ mysticâ significazione, confirmare voluit quod ipse fecit.*

† How precious a witness have we in this conduct of our Lord against the tendency which our indolence and our cowardice ever favours, of giving up to the world, or to the devil, aught of human, which, in itself innocent, is capable of being drawn up into the higher world of holiness, as it is in danger of sinking down and coming under the law of the flesh and of the world! How remarkable a contrast does Christ’s presence at this wedding feast offer to the manner in which a man even of St. Cyprian’s practical strength and energy yields up these very marriage festivals as occasions where, from the still surviving heathenism of manners, purity must suffer—where the flesh must have its way; so that his counsel is, not to dispute them with the world, not to vindicate them anew for holiness and for God, but only to avoid them altogether (*De Hab. Virg.* 3): *Et quoniam continentiae bonum querimus, perniciosa quæque et infesta vitemus. Nec illa prætero quea dum negligentia in usum veniunt, contra pudicos et sobrios mores licentiam sibi de usurpatione fecerunt. Quasdam non pudet nubentibus interesse.* And presently, after describing the disorders of such seasons, he adds, 4: *Nuptiarum festa improba et convivia lasciva vitentur, quorum périculosa contagio est.* Compare the picture which Chrysostom gives of marriage festivals in his time (tōin. iii. p. 195, Ben. ed.),—melancholy witnesses, yet not, as some would have us believe, of a Church which had fallen back into heathen defilements, but of one which had not as yet leavened an essentially heathen, though nominally Christian, society, through and through with its own life and power.

*unto Him, They have no wine.*" It may have been that his presence and that of his disciples, a presence unlooked for, as of those who had just arrived from a journey, increased beyond expectation the number of the guests; and so the provision made for their entertainment may have proved insufficient. The Mother of the Lord was perhaps near akin to the bridegroom or the bride; at all events from one reason or another did not account it unseemly to mingle with, and in some sort to guide, the festal arrangements.\* She was evidently distressed at the embarrassments of that humble household, and would willingly have removed them. Yet what exactly she expected from her divine Son, when she thus turned to Him, is hard to determine. We know that this was his first miracle (ver. 11), so that she could not, from anterior displays of his power and grace, have now been emboldened to look for further manifestations of the same. Some indeed, of whom Maldonatus is one, take not so absolutely the denial of all miracles preceding, but with this limitation understood:—this was the first of his miracles wherein He *showed forth* his glory; other such works He may have performed already in the smaller circle of his family, and thus have prepared them for more open displays of his grace and power. But, without evading thus the plain declaration of St. John, we may well understand how she, who more than any other had kept and pondered in her heart all the tokens and prophetic intimations of the coming glory of her Son (Luke ii. 19, 51), should have believed that in Him powers were latent, equal to the present need, and which, however He had restrained them until now, He could and would put forth, whenever the fit time had arrived.† This is much more reasonable than to suppose that she had no defi-

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\* Lightfoot supposes that it was a marriage in the house of Mary (John xix. 25), wife of Cleophas. For the arguments see his *Harmony*, in loc., and Greswell, *Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 120.

† So Theophylact, Euthymius, and Neander (*Leben Jesu*, p. 370).

nite purpose in these words; but only turned to Him now, as having ever found Him a wise counsellor in least things as in greatest.\* Bengel's suggestion is curious, that it was a hint to Him that *they* should leave, and thus by their example break up the assembly, before the necessities of their hosts should appear;† and Calvin's is more curious still.‡

Her interference seems not at first to promise any good result. “*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee?*” The expositors of the Church of Rome have been very anxious to rid this answer of every shadow of rebuke or blame. Entire essays have been written with this single purpose. Now it is quite true that in the address “*Woman*” there is nothing of severity or harshness, however it may have some such sound to an English ear. In those last and tenderest words which the Lord addressed to his mother, He used the same language, “*Woman, behold thy Son*” (John xix. 26). So far from any harshness, the compunction has something solemn in it, and cannot but have such where the dignity of woman is duly felt. But it is otherwise with the words following, “*What have I to do with thee?*”§ Comparing them with the same or like expressions elsewhere,

\* So Cocceius: Verba nihil aliud portendunt quam Mariam tanquam sollicitam et parentem operuisse ipsi defectum vini, ex condolentiâ nimirum.

† Velim discedas, ut ceteri item discedant, antequam penuria patefiat.

‡ Ut piâ aliquâ exhortatione convivis tedium eximeret, ac simul levaret pudorem sponsi.

§ Τί ἔροις καὶ σοί; cf. Judg. xi. 12; 1 Kin. xvii. 18; 2 Kin. iii. 13, where the same phrase is used; it is elliptic, and the word *κοινὸν* may be supplied. Thus in the second of these passages, “What is there in common to us twain, to me a sinful woman, and thee a man of God, that we should have thus come together to my harm?” And in the third, “What have we in common, I a prophet of the true God, and thou the son of that idolatrous king Ahab, that thou shouldst ask counsel of me?” Cf. Josh. xxii. 24; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24; Luke viii. 28. It is only out of an entire ignorance of the idiom that some understand the words, “What is that to thee and Me? What concerns it us twain that there *is* no wine?”

their meaning is clearly this : “Let me alone ; what is there common to thee and Me ? we stand in this matter on altogether different grounds.” All expositors of the early Church\*, have allowed, even by the confession of the Romanists themselves, that there is more or less of reproof and repulse in this answer ; and they themselves are obliged to admit the *appearance* of such ; only they deny the reality. He so replied, they say, to teach *us*, not *her*, that higher respects than those of flesh and blood moved Him to the choosing of the present moment for the first putting forth of his divine power.† Most certainly it was to teach this ; but to teach it first to her who from her wondrous position as the “blessed among women” was, more than any other, in danger of forgetting it ; and in her to teach it to all. “She had not yet,” says Chrysostom, “that opinion of Him which she ought, but because she bare Him, counted that, after the manner of other mothers, she might in all things command *Him* whom it more became her to reverence and worship as her Lord.”‡ The true parallel to this passage, and that throwing most light on it, is Matt. xii. 46-50.

Any severity which this answer may seem to have in the

\* Two examples for many. Irenaeus (iii. 16) : Properante Mariâ ad admirabile vini signum, et ante tempus volente participare compendii pœculo, Dominus repellens ejus intempestivam festinationem, dixit, Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier? nondum venit hora mea, exspectans eam horam quæ est a Patre præcognita. He means by the compendii poculum, the cup of wine not resulting from the slower processes of nature, but made per saltum, at a single intervention of divine power, therefore compendiously. Cf. iii. 11; and Chrysostom ascribes her request to vanity (*Hom. xxi. in Joh.*) : Ἐβούλετο . . . ἔαντὴν λαμπροτέραν ποιῆσαι διὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, therefore was it that Christ σφοδρότερον ἀπεκρίνατο.

† Maldonatus : Simulavit se matrem reprehendere, cum minime reprehenderet, ut ostenderet se non humano, non sanguinis respectu, sed solâ caritate, et ut sese, quis sit, declararet, miraculum facere. St. Bernard had gone before him in this explanation : it was, he says, for our sakes Christ so answered, ut conversos ad Dominum jam non sollicitet carnalium cura parentum, et necessitudines illæ non impediant exercitium spirituale.

‡ *Hom. xxi. in Joh.*

reading, we cannot doubt was mitigated by the manner of its speaking; suffering, as it plainly did, a near compliance with her request to look through its apparent refusal. For when she “*saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it,*” it is evident she read a Yes, and, as the sequel shows, rightly read it, in his apparent No. It must be confessed that these words are not without their difficulty, following close on that announcement, “*Mine hour is not yet come.*” For that, most of all when taken in connexion with what just went before, seems to put off not for the present, only for a few minutes, or for an hour, the manifestation of his glory as the Messiah, but to postpone it altogether to some remote period of his ministry. Indeed, his “*hour*” is generally, most of all in the language of St. John, the hour of his passion, or of his departure from the world (vii. 30; viii. 20; xii. 23, 27; xiii. 1; xvii. 1\*). Here, however, and perhaps on one other occasion (vii. 6), it indicates a time close at hand. His hour had not yet come. Not till the wine was wholly exhausted would it arrive; as yet that was only failing. Then would be the time to act, when by its entire failure, manifest to all, the miracle would be above suspicion; else, in Augustine’s words, He might seem rather to  *mingle* elements than to  *change* them.† When all other help fails, then, and not till then, the “*hour*” of the great Helper has arrived. Luther here notes, and presents to us for an example, the faith of Mary, who, nothing daunted by the semblance of a refusal, reads between the lines of this refusal another answer to her implied petition; is sure that even the fault which clave to

\* It is δ καιρός there, η ὥρα here.

† So the author of a sermon in the *Appendix* to St. Augustine (*Serm. xcii.*): Hac responsione interim debemus advertere quod de nuptiali vino pars aliqua adhuc forte resederat. Ideo nondum erat Domini plena hora virtutum, ne miscere magis elementa quam mutare videretur [ne aqua vino admixta crederetur: Grotius]. Maldonatus: Cur ergo miraculum fecit, si tempus non venerat? Non venerat cum mater petivit; venerat eum fecit, modico licet intervallo. So Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius.

her prayer shall not hinder it altogether; but that in due time it shall be granted; is indeed so sure of this that she not obscurely guesses at, and even indicates the manner of the granting, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*"

Very beautiful is it here to observe the facility with which our Lord yields Himself to the supply, not of the absolute wants merely, but of the superfluities, of others; not indeed so much for the guests' sake, as for that of the bridal pair, whose marriage feast, by the unlooked-for shortcoming of the wine, was in danger of being exposed to mockery and scorn.\* This He will avert, who can enter into *all* needs, the finer no less than the commoner needs of our life. For all the grace, and beauty, and courtesy of life are taken account of in Christianity, as well as life's sterner realities; and the spirit of Christ, in Himself and in his disciples, allows all, while giving to each its due place and importance. We may contrast this his readiness to aid others, with his stern refusal to minister by the same almighty power to his own extremest needs. He who made wine out of water, might have made bread out of stones;† but spreading a table for others, He is content to hunger and to thirst Himself.

The conditions under which the miracle was accomplished are all, as Chrysostom‡ long ago observed, such as to exclude any possible suspicion of collusion. "*And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.*" They were vessels for *water*, not for *wine*; thus none could insinuate that probably some sediment of wine remained in them, which lending a flavour to water poured

\* Hilary (*De Trin.* iii. 5): *Sponsus tristis est, familia turbatur, sollemnitas nuptialis convivii periclitatur.*

† Augustine (*Serm.* cxxiii. 2): *Qui poterat talia facere, dignatus est indigere. Qui fecit de aquâ vinum, potuit facere et de lapidibus panem.*

‡ *Hom.* xxii. *in Joh.*

on it, formed thus a thinnest kind of wine; even as the same explanation is excluded by the praise which the ruler of the feast bestows upon the new supply (ver. 10). The circumstance of these vessels being at hand is accounted for. They were there by no premeditated plan, but in accordance with the customs and traditional observances of the Jews in the matter of washing (Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 2-4; Luke xi. 39); for this seems more probable than that this "*purifying*" has reference to any distinctly commanded legal observances. The quantity, too, which these vessels contained, was enormous; not such as might have been brought in unobserved, but "*two or three firkins apiece.*" And at the beginning they were empty; so that the servants who, on that bidding, had filled them with water, and who knew what liquid they had poured in, became themselves, by this act of theirs, witnesses to the reality of the miracle. Else it might only have appeared, as in fact it did only appear to the ruler of the feast, that the wine came from some unexpected quarter; "*he knew not whence it was; but the servants which drew the water,*"\*—not, that is, the water now made wine, but who *had drawn* the simpler element, on which the Lord put forth his transforming powers,—"*knew.*"

*"And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it."* Like most other acts of creation, or, more strictly, of *becoming*, this of the water becoming wine, is concealed from sight. That which is poured into the jars as water is drawn out as wine; but the actual process of the change we toil in vain to conceive. And yet in truth it is in no way stranger, save in the rapidity with which it is effected, than that which is every

\* The Vulgate rightly: *Qui hauserant.* De Wette: *Welche das Wasser geschöpfet hatten.* So the Ambrosian Hymn:

Vel hydriis plenis aquæ  
Vino saporem infuderis,  
*Hausit minister conscius*  
*Quod ipse non impleverat.*

day going forward among us, but to which use and custom have so dulled our eyes, that commonly we do not marvel at it at all; and, because we can call it by its name, suppose that we have discovered its secret, or rather that there is no secret in it to discover. He who each year prepares the wine in the grape, causing it to absorb, and swell with, the moisture of earth and heaven, to transmute this into nobler juices of its own, concentrated all those slower processes now into the act of a single moment, and accomplished in an instant what usually He takes many months to accomplish. This analogy does not indeed help us to understand what the Lord at this time did, but yet brings before us that in this He was working in the line of (*above*, indeed, but not *across*, or counter to) his more ordinary workings, which we see daily around us, the unnoticed miracles of every-day nature. That which this had peculiarly its own, and which took it out from the order of nature, was the power and will by which all the intervening steps of these tardier processes were overleaped, their methods superseded, and the result attained in an instant.\*

It has been sometimes debated whether "*the governor of the feast*" was himself one of the guests, set either by general consent or by the selection of the host over the banquet; or, as Chrysostom and others will have it, a chief attendant,

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. viii.*): *Ipse enim fecit vinum illo die in nuptiis in sex illis hydriis quas impleri aquâ præcepit, qui omni anno facit hoc in vitibus.* Sicut enim quod miserunt ministri in hydrias, in vinum conversum est opere Domini, sic et quod nubes fundunt, in vinum convertitur ejusdem opere Domini. Illud autem non miramur, quia omni anno fit: assiduitate amisit admirationem. And again (*Serm. cxxiii. 3.*): *Quæ aqua erat, vinum factum viderunt homines et obstupuerunt. Quid aliud fit de pluvia per radicem vitis?* *Ipse illa fecit, ipse ista; illa ut pascaris, ista ut mireris.* So also *De Gen. ad Litt. vi. 18.* Chrysostom (*Hom. xxii. in Joh.*): *Δεικνὺς ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐν ταῖς ἀμπέλοις τὸ ὑδωρ μεταβάλλων, καὶ τὸν ὑετὸν διὰ τῆς βλέψης εἰς οἶνον τρέπων, ὅπερ ἐν τῷ φυτῷ διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου γίνεται, τούτῳ ἀθρόον ἐν τῷ γάμῳ εἰργάσατο.* Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moral.* vi. 15.

charged with ordering the course of the feast, and overlooking the ministrations of the inferior servants.\* The analogy of Greek and Roman usages† points him out as himself a guest, invested with this office for the time; and the passage from the Apocrypha quoted below,‡ shows that a similar custom was in use among the Jews. Indeed the freedom of remonstrance which he allows himself with the bridegroom seems decisive of his position; for such would hardly have found place but from an equal. It was for him to taste and distribute the wine; to him, therefore, the Lord commanded that this should be first brought, even in this little matter allowing and honouring the established order and usage of society, and giving to every man his due.

*“When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,”*—called, that is, to him,§ and with something of a festive exclamation, not unsuitable to the season, exclaimed: *“Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse:|| but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”* Many

\* So by Severus; by Juvencus, who calls him *summum ministrum*; by Kuinoel, and others.

† This *ἀρχιτρίκλινος* will then answer very much to the *συμποσιάρχης* among the Greeks, and the *rex convivii*, or *magister convivii*, or *modimperator*, of the Romans. It was his part, in the words of Plato, *παιδαγωγῶν συμπόσιον* (Becker, *Charicles*, vol. i. p. 465). He appears here as the *προγεύστης*. The word *ἀρχιτρίκλινος* is late, and of rare occurrence; Petronius has *triclinarches*.

‡ Eccl. xxxii. 1, 2: “If thou be made the master of a feast (*ἡγούμενος*), lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest; take diligent care of them, and so sit down. And when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place, that thou mayest be merry with them, and receive a crown for thy well ordering of the feast.”

§ Maldonatus: Non quod ad se venire jusscerit, quod minime fuissest urbanum, sed quod recumbentem appellans interrogaverit, quid optimum vinum in finem reservâsset.

|| Ἐλάσσω implies at once worse and weaker. We have in English the same use of “small.” Perhaps “poorer” would be the nearest

interpreters have been very anxious to rescue the original word, which we have given by “*well drunk*,” from itself implying aught of excess. They have done this, lest otherwise it might seem as though the guests at this marriage festival had already overpassed the limits of temperance, and that we had here one of those unseemly revels (*temulenta convivia* Cyprian calls them) which too often disgraced a marriage,\*—with all the difficulties, of Christ’s sanctioning with his presence so great an abuse of God’s gifts, and, stranger still, ministering by his divine power to a yet worse excess. But there is no need of this anxious dealing with the word.† We may be quite sure there was no such excess here; for to this the Lord would as little have given allowance by his presence, as He would have helped it forward by a special wonder-work of his own. The ruler of the feast does but refer to a common practice, that of producing the best wine first, at the same time noticing the motive, namely, that men’s palates after a while are blunted, and their power of discerning between good and bad is diminished; and thus an inferior wine passes with them then, which would not have past with them before. There is no special application to the guests present, but only to the corrupt customs and fashions too common in the world;—unless, indeed, it be in the minds of some who would mar, if by any means they could, the image of a perfect Holiness, which offends and rebukes them.

Of a piece with this is *their* miserable objection, who find the miracle incredible, since, granting that the Lord did not actually minister to an excess already commenced, still by the creation of “so large and perilous a quantity of wine”

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word. Pliny in like manner (*H. N.* xiv. 14) speaks of the meanness of some, qui convivis alia quam sibimet ipsis ministrant, aut *procedente mensa* subjiciunt.

\* *De Hab. Virg.* 3.

† Augustine, indeed, goes further than any, for he makes not merely the guests, but the ruler of the feast himself to have “*well drunk*” indeed. The Lord not merely made wine, but, he adds (*De Gen. ad Litt.* vi. 13), tale vinum, quod *ebrius* etiam conviva laudaret.

(for the quantity *was* enormous\*), He would have put temptation in men's way. With the same right, every good gift of God which is open to any possible abuse, every plenteous return of the field, every large abundance of the vineyard, might be accused of being a temptation; and so in some sort it is (cf. Luke xii. 16), a proving of men's temperance and moderation in the midst of abundance.† But man is to be perfected, not by exemption *from* temptation, but rather by victory *in* temptation; and the secret of temperance lies not in the scanty supply, but in the strong self-restraint. That this gift should be large, was only that which we should look for. He, a King, gave as became a king. No niggard giver in the ordinary bounties of his kingdom of nature, neither was He a niggard giver now, when He brought those common gifts into the kingdom of his grace, and made them directly to serve Him there (cf. Luke v. 6, 7).

But this saying of the governor of the feast must not be suffered to pass by, as describing only a trivial practice and a sordid economy of this world. He may not have intended, doubtless he did not intend, any more; and yet his words excellently set forth to us the difference between the manner and order of the world's giving, and of Christ's; the man giving utterance to a far larger and deeper thought than he meant. The world does indeed give its best and choicest at the begin-

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\* The Attic *μετρητής* (= *βάδος* = 72 *ξέσται* = 72 sextarii) = 8 gallons 7.365 pints, imperial measure; so that each of these six vessels, containing two or three *μετρηταί* apiece, did in round numbers hold about twenty gallons or more.

† Calvin: *Nostro vitio fit, si ejus benignitas irritamentum est luxuriæ; quin potius hac temperantiae nostræ vera est probatio, si in mediâ affluentia parci tamen et moderati sumus:* cf. Suicer, *Thes. s. v. οὐνος*. It is instructive to notice the ascetic tone which Strauss takes (*Leben Jesu*, vol. ii. p. 229), when speaking of this "Luxuswunder," as he terms it, contrasted with that which he assumes when he desires to depreciate the character of John the Baptist: but truly he is of that generation that call Jesus a wine-bibber, and say that John has a devil; with whom that which is godlike can in no form find favour. Some of Woolston's vilest ribaldry (*Fourth Discourse on the Miracles of our Saviour*, p. 23 sqq.) is spent upon this theme.

ning, its “*good wine*” first, but has only meaner and poorer substitutes at the last. “*When men have well drunk,*” when their spiritual palate is blunted, when they have lost the discernment between moral good and evil, then it puts upon them that which it would not have dared to offer at the first,—coarser pleasures, viler enjoyments, the swine’s husks. Those who worship the world must recognize at last its fittest representation in that great image which Nebuchadnezzar beheld in his dream (Dan. ii. 31); the head, indeed, showing as fine gold, but its material growing ever baser, till it finishes with the iron and clay at the last.

“To be a prodigal’s favourite, then, worse lot!  
A miser’s pensioner,”

this is the portion of its votaries. But it is otherwise with the guests of Christ, the heavenly bridegroom. He ever reserves for them whom *He* has bidden, “*the good wine*” unto the last.\* In the words of the most eloquent of our divines, “The world presents us with fair language, promising hopes, convenient fortunes, pompous honours, and these are the outside of the bowl; but when it is swallowed, these dissolve in

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\* Thus H. de Sto Victore (*De Are. Mor.* i. 1): *Omnis namque homo, id est, carnalis primum vinum bonum ponit, quia in suâ delectatione falsam quandam dulcedinem sentit; sed postquam furor mali desiderii mentem inebriaverit, tune quod deterius est propinat, quia spina conscientiae superveniens mentem, quam prius falso delectabat, graviter cruciat.* Sed Sponsus noster postremo vinum bonum porrigit, dum mentem, quam sui dulcedine amoris replere disponit, quâdam prius tribulationum compunctione amaricari sinit, ut post gustum amaritudinis avidius bibatur suavissimum poculum caritatis. Corn. a Lapide: *Hic est typus fallacie mundi, qui initio res speciosas oculis objicit, deinde sub iis deteriores et viles inducit, itaque sui amatores decipit et illudit.* An unknown author (*Bernardi Opp.* vol. ii. p. 513): *In futurâ enim vitâ aqua omnis laboris et actionis terrenæ in vinum divinæ contemplationis commutabitur, implebunturque omnes hydriæ usque ad summum.* Omnes enim implebuntur in bonis domîs Domini, cum illæ desiderabiles nuptiæ Sponsi et sponsæ celebrabuntur: bibeturque in summâ lœtitia omnium clamantium Domino et dicentium; Tu bonum viuum servâsti usque adhuc. I know not from whence this line comes,

Ille merum tarde, dat tamen ille merum;  
but it evidently belongs to this miracle.

an instant, and there remains bitterness and the malignity of coloquintida. Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face, and honey in the lip; but when we ‘have well drunk,’ then comes ‘*that which is worse*,’ a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a caitiff disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when after the manner of purifying of the Christians, we fill our waterpots with water, watering our couch with our tears, and moistening our cheeks with the perpetual distillations of repentance, then Christ turns our water into wine, first penitents and then communicants—first waters of sorrow and then the wine of the chalice; . . . . for Jesus keeps the best wine to the last, not only because of the direct reservations of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays, such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward.”\*

“*This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.*” The Evangelist expressly, and, it would seem, pointedly, excludes from all historic credit the miracles of the Infancy, which are found in such rank abundance in nearly all the apocryphal Gospels; for, of course, he means not merely that this was the first miracle which Jesus wrought in Cana, but that this miracle in Cana was the first which He wrought;† and the Church has ever re-

\* Jeremy Taylor, *Life of Christ*. Worthy to stand beside this, and the unfolding of the same thought, is that exquisite poem in *The Christian Year*, upon the second Sunday after Epiphany, suggested by this miracle, the Gospel of that day. And Plato, *Rep.* x. 12, supplies a very interesting study as a heathen parallel. He is there describing the close of the good man’s life and the bad; the clustering honours which attend the evening of the good man’s days; the scorn which even the world itself has in store for the bad.

† Thus Tertullian (*De Bapt.* 9) calls it, *prima rudimenta potestatis sue*. And this day has been sometimes called, *dies natalis virtutum Domini*.

garded these words as decisive on this point.\* The statement is important, and not unconnected with one main purpose of St. John, in his Gospel, namely, to repel and remove all unreal notions concerning the person of his Lord,—notions which nothing would have helped more to uphold than those merely phantastic and capricious miracles,—favourites, therefore, with all manner of docetic heretics,—which are ascribed to his infancy.

Of none less than the Son could be affirmed that He “*manifested forth his glory*;” for every other would have manifested forth the glory of God; He only, being God, could manifest his own; for “*glory*” (*δόξα*) here must have all its emphasis; it is assuredly no creaturely attribute, but a divine; comprehended and involved in the idea of the Logos as the absolute Light. As such He rays forth light from Himself, and this effluence is “*his glory*” (John i. 14; Matt. xvi. 27; Mark viii. 38). This his “*glory*” during the time that He tabernacled upon earth for the most part was hidden; the veil of our flesh concealed it from the sight of men: but now, in this work of his grace and power, it burst through the covering which concealed it, revealing itself to the spiritual eyes of his disciples; they “*beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*”† And as a conse-

\* Thus see Epiphanius (*Hær.* li. 20), from whose words it would appear that some Catholics were inclined to admit these miracles of the Infancy, as affording an argument against the Cerinthians, and a proof that it was not at his Baptism first that the Christ was united to the man Jesus. And Euthymius (in loc.): *ιστόρησεν αὐτὸν [δὲ Ἰωάννης], χρησιμεύον εἰς τὸ μὴ πιστεύειν τοῖς λεγομένοις παιδικοῖς θαύμασι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.* Cf. Chrysostom, *Hom.* xvi., xx., xxii. *in Joh.*; and Thilo, *Cod. Apocr.* p. lxxxiv. sqq.

† The Eastern Church, as is well known, counted the Baptism of Christ, being his recognition before men and by men in his divine character, for the great manifestation of his glory to the world, for his *Epiphany*, and was wont to celebrate it as such. But the Western, which laid not such stress on the Baptism, saw his Epiphany rather in the adoration of the Magians, the first-fruits of the heathen world. At a later period, indeed, it placed other great moments in his life, moments in which his divine majesty, his *δόξα*, gloriously shone out, in connexion with this festival; such, for instance, as the Baptism,

quence, "*his disciples believed on Him.*" The work, besides its more immediate purpose, had a further end and aim, the confirming, strengthening, exalting of their faith, who, already believing in Him, were thus the more capable of receiving an increase of faith,—of being lifted from faith to faith, advanced from faith in an earthly teacher to faith in a heavenly Lord\* (1 Kin. xvii. 24).

This first miracle of the New Covenant has its inner mystical meaning. The first miracle of Moses was a turning of water into blood (Exod. vii. 20), nor was this without its symbolic fitness; for the law, which came by Moses, was a ministration of death, and working wrath (2 Cor. iii. 6-9);†

as the feeding of the five thousand, and as this turning of the water into wine, which last continually affords the theme to the later writers of the Western Church for the homily at Epiphany, as it gives us the Gospel for one of the Epiphany Sundays. But these secondary allusions belong not to the first introduction of the feast, so that the following passage should have prevented the editors of the new volume of St. Augustine's sermons (*Serm. Inediti*, Paris, 1842) from attributing the sermon which contains it (*Serm. xxxviii. in Epiph.*) to that Father: Hodiernam diem Ecclesia per orbem celebrat totum, sive quod stella præ ceteris fulgens divitibus Magis parvum non parvi Regis monstravit hospitium, sive quod hodie Christus primum fecisse dicitur signum, quando aquas repente commutavit in vinum, sive quod a Joanne isto die creditur baptizatus et Patris consonâ voce Dei filius revelatur. The same mark of a later origin cleaves to many other sermons which they have printed as his. In his genuine, he knows only of the adoration of the Wise Men as the scriptural fact which this festival of the Epiphany commemorates.

\* This is plainly the true explanation (in the words of Ammonius, *προσθήκην ἐδέξαντό τυν τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν πίστεως*), and not that which Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 17), for the interests of his harmony, upholds, namely, that they are here called "disciples" by anticipation; because subsequently to the miracle they believed (non jam discipulos, sed qui futuri erant discipuli intelligere debemus); as one might say, The Apostle Paul was born at Tarsus.

† Yet as Moses has here, where he stands in contrast to Christ, a mutatio in deterius, so in another place, where he stands as his type, he has, like Him, a mutatio in melius (Exod. xv. 25), changing the bitter waters to sweet; thus too Elisha (2 Kin. ii. 19-22); while yet the more excellent transmutation, which should be not merely the rectifying of qualities already existing, but the imparting of new, was reserved for the Son; who was indeed not a betterer of the old life of man, but the bringer in of a new; who did not reform, but regenerate.

but the first miracle of Christ was a turning of water into wine, and this too was a meet inauguration of all which should follow, for his was a ministration of life; He came, the dispenser of that true wine that maketh glad the heart of man (Ps. civ. 15). Another prophetic aspect this miracle offers; which yet indeed is not another, but only a different aspect of the same; namely, that even as Christ turned now the water into wine, so should He turn the poorer dispensation, the thin and watery elements of the Jewish religion (Heb. vii. 18), into richer and nobler, into the gladdening wine of a higher faith. The whole Jewish dispensation in its comparative weakness and poverty was aptly symbolized by the water; and only in type and prophecy could point to Him, who should come “binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine;” who “washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes” (Gen. xlix. 11. cf. John xv. 1), but now by this work of his He gave token that He was indeed come, that his people’s joy might be full.\* Nor less do we behold symbolized here, that

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\* Corn. a Lapide: *Christus ergo initio suæ prædicationis mutans aquam in vinum significabat se legem Mosaicam, instar aquæ insipidam et frigidam, conversurum in Evangelium gratiæ, quæ instar vini est, generosa, sapida, ardens, et efficax.* And Bernard, in a preëminently beautiful sermon upon this miracle (Bened. ed. p. 814), has in fact the same interpretation: *Tunc [aqua] mutatur in vinum, cum timor expellitur a caritate, et implentur omnia fervore spiritus et jucundâ devotione;* cf. *De Divers. Serm.* xviii. 2; and Eusebius (*Dem. Evang.* ix. 8): *Σύμβολον ἦν τὸ παραδοξὸν μιστικῶρον κράματος, μεταβληθέντος ἐκ τῆς σωματικώτερας ἐπὶ τὴν νοερὰν καὶ πνευματικὴν ἐνφρόσυνην τοῦ πιστικοῦ τῆς καυῆς Διαθήκης κράματος.* Augustine is in the same line, when he says (*In Ev. Joh. tract. ix.*): *Tollitur velamen, cum transieris ad Dominum, . . . et quod aqua erat, vinum tibi fit. Lege libros omnes propheticos, non intellecto Christo, quid tam insipidum et fatuum invenies?* Intellige ibi Christum, non solum sapit quod legis, sed etiam inebriat. He illustrates this from Luke xxiv. 25-27. Gregory the Great (*Hom. vi. in Ezek.*) gives it another turn: *Aquam nobis in vinum vertit, quando ipsa historia per allegoriæ mysterium, in spiritalem nobis intelligentiam commutatur.*—Before the rise of the Eutychian heresy had made it unadvisable to use such terms as *κράσις, ἀνάκρασις, μέζης,* to designate the union of the two natures in Christ, or such phrases as Tertullian’s *Deo mixtus homo*, we some-

whole work which the Son of God is evermore accomplishing in the world,—ennobling all that He touches, making saints out of sinners, angels out of men, and in the end heaven out of earth, a new paradise of God out of the old wilderness of the world. For the prophecy of the world's regeneration, of the day in which his disciples shall drink of the fruit of the vine new in his kingdom, is here. In this humble supper we have the rudiments of the glorious festival, which when it shall arrive, his hour shall have indeed come, and He shall be there, Himself the Bridegroom, and his Church the Bride.

Irenæus,\* in an interesting passage, associates this miracle and that of the loaves; and contemplating them together as a prophecy of the Eucharist, finds alike in each a witness against all Gnostic notions of a creation originally impure. The Lord, he says, might have created, with no subjacent material, the wine with which He cheered these guests, the bread with which He fed those multitudes; but He rather chose to take his Father's creatures on which to display his power, in witness that it was the same God that at the beginning had made the waters and caused the earth to bear its fruits, who did in those last days give by his Son the cup of blessing and the bread of life.†

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times find allusions to what Christ here did, as though it were symbolical of the ennobling of the human nature through its being transfigured by the divine in his person. Thus Irenæus (v. 1, 3) complains of the Ebionites, that they cling to the first Adam who was cast out of Paradise, and will know nothing of the second, its restorer: Reprobant itaque hi commixtionem vini cœlestis, et solam aquam secularem volunt esse,—so Dörner (*Von der Person Christi*, p. 57) understands this passage: yet possibly he may refer there to their characteristic custom of using water alone, instead of wine mingled with water, in the Holy Communion: the passage will even then show how Irenæus found in the wine and in the water, the apt symbols of the higher and the lower, of the divine and human.

\* *Con. Hær.* iii. 11; Chrysostom in like manner, in regard to the Manichæans, *Hom. xxii. in Joh.*

† The account of this miracle by Sedulius is a favourable specimen of his poetry:

Prima suæ Dominus, thalamis dignatus adesse,  
Virtutis documenta dedit; convivaque præsens

Pascere, non pasci, veniens, mirabile! fusas  
In vinum convertit aquas; dimittere gaudent  
Pallorem latices; mutavit læsa [læta?] saporem  
Unda suum, largita merum, mensasque per omnes  
Dulcia non nato rubuerunt pocula musto.  
Implevit sex ergo lacus hoc nectare Christus,  
Quippe ferax qui Vitis erat, virtute colonâ  
Omnia fructiferas, eujus sub tegmine blando  
Mitis inocciduas enutrit pampinus uvas.

In very early times it was a favourite subject for Christian Art. On many old sarcophagi Jesus is seen standing and touching with the rod of Moses, the rod of might usually placed in his hand when He is set forth as a worker of wonders, three vessels,—*three*, because in their skill-less delineations the artists could not manage to find room for more. Sometimes He has a roll of writing in his hand, as much as to say, This is written in the Scripture; or the governor of the feast is somewhat earnestly rebuking the bridegroom for having withheld the good wine till last; having himself tasted, he is giving to him the cup, to convince him of his error (Münster, *Sinnbild. d. alt. Christ.* vol. ii. p. 92).

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## 2. THE HEALING OF THE NOBLEMAN'S SON.

JOHN iv. 46-54.

THERE is an apparent contradiction in the words that introduce this miracle. Jesus, it is said, “*went into Galilee* ;” and why? “*for He Himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country* ;” and yet Galilee *was* his own country, and immediately after we are told that the Galileans, so far from rejecting, “*received*”\* or gave Him honourable welcome, “*having seen all the things that He did at Jerusalem at the feast*.” This must be removed, not as Tittmann, and some older expositors propose, by making St. John, in fact, to say that the Lord went into Galilee, *though* He had testified that a prophet was unhonoured at home; for there is no compelling the words to mean this. Origen’s explanation, which some moderns follow, can as little be accepted. He understands our Lord’s “*own country*” as Judæa, and finds in this saying an explanation of his retiring from thence into Galilee. But the Lord’s birth at Bethlehem in Judæa being a fact not generally known (John vii. 41, 42), the slight esteem in which He was there held, could not have had this explanation. Rather we must accept “*his own country*”† in its narrowest sense, as the place where He had been brought up, namely, Nazareth; and then these words will account for his not returning thither (with a direct reference to the testimony which He Himself had borne in its synagogue, “*No prophet is accepted in his own country*,” Luke iv. 24; Matt. xiii. 57); but preferring Cana and other cities of Ga-

\* Ἐδέξαντο = benevole et honorifice exceperunt; so often elsewhere.

† Πατρίς, cf. Matt. xiii. 54, 57; Mark vi. 1, 4; Luke iv. 16. Chrysostom (*Hom. xxxv. in Joh.*) has this right view of the meaning, with the exception, indeed, of understanding by “*his own country*,” Capernaum (Luke x. 15) rather than Nazareth; ἐμαρτύρησε will then have a pluperfect sense, as so often in the N. T.

lilee. “*And the Galilæans,*” as St. John, with an emphasis, relates, “*received Him,*” albeit the Nazarenes, the people of his own immediate city, had rejected, and would have killed Him.\*

“*There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.*” It is not wholly improbable, which has been supposed by some,† that this “*nobleman*”‡ is no other than Chuza, Herod’s steward, whose wife, remarkably enough, appears among the holy women that ministered to the Lord of their substance (Luke viii. 3. cf. ver. 53). Only some mighty

\* There is another view of the passage possible, namely, that St. John, recording (ver. 43) Christ’s return to Galilee, is explaining why He should have first left it (ver. 44), and why He should have returned to it now (ver. 45). He left it, because, as He had Himself testified (*ἐμαρτύρησε*, a first aorist for a pluperfect), a prophet is unhonoured in his own country; but He returned to it now, because his countrymen, the Galilæans, having seen the signs that He did at Jerusalem, were prepared to welcome, and did welcome Him, in quite another spirit from that which they manifested at his first appearance: “*so* (ver. 46) Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee.” This is Neander’s explanation (*Leben Jesu*, p. 385), and Jacobi’s (*Theol. Stud. und Krit.*, 1836, p. 906).

† Lightfoot, Chenuitz, and others.

‡ The precise meaning of *βασιλικός* here never can be exactly fixed; Chrysostom (*Hom. xxxv. in Joh.*) can only suggest a meaning; showing that even in his day it was not to be explained by the familiar usage of them with whom Greek was a living language. Three meanings have been offered. Either by the *βασιλικός* is meant one of those that were of the king’s party, a *royalist*, in which case the term would be much the same as Herodian, designating one of those that sided with the faction of the Herods, father and son, and helped to maintain them on the throne (Lightfoot); or, with something of a narrower signification, the *βασιλικός* may be one especially attached to the court, aulicus, or as Jerome (*In Esai. lxv.*) calls this man *palatinus* (*Regulus qui Græce dicitur βασιλικός, quem nos de aulâ regiâ rectius interpretari possumus palatinum*); thus in the margin of our Bibles it is “courtier;” or else, though this seems here the least probable supposition, *βασιλικός* may mean one of royal blood; so in Lucian the word is four times applied to those who are actually kings, or are related to them. Perhaps no better term could be found than “*nobleman*,” which has something of the doubtfulness of the original expression, and while it does not require, yet does not deny, that he was of royal blood.

and marvellous work of this kind would have been likely to draw a steward of Herod's, with his family, into the Gospel net. Or, as some suggest, he may have been Manaen, the foster-brother of Herod (Acts xiii. 1). Whether he was one of these, or some other not elsewhere named in Scripture, "*when he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.*" From a certain severity which speaks out in our Lord's reply, "*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe,*" we gather that this suppliant was one *driven* to Jesus by the strong constraint of an outward need, a need which no other but He could supply (Isai. xxvi. 16), rather than one *drawn* by the inner necessities and desires of his soul; such as would not have come at all, but for this.\* Sharing in the carnal temper of the Jews in general (for plural, "*ye will not believe,*" includes them in the same condemnation), he had (hitherto, at least) no organ for perceiving the glory of Christ as it shone out in his person and in his doctrine. "*Signs and wonders*" might compel him to a belief, but nothing else; unlike those Samaritans whom the Lord has just quitted, and who, without a miracle, had "*believed because of his word*" (John iv. 41). But "*the Jews require a sign*" (1 Cor. i. 22), and this one, in the smallness of his present faith, straitened and limited the power of the Lord. Christ must "*come down,*"† if his

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\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xvi.*) is disposed to take a still more unfavourable estimate of the moral condition of this suppliant, to class him with those who asked of the Lord a sign, tempting Him: *Arguit hominem in fide tepidum aut frigidum, aut omnino nullius fidei: sed tentare cupientem de sanitate filii sui, qualis esset Christus, quis esset, quantum posset. Verba enim rogantis audivimus, cor diffidentis non videmus; sed ille pronuntiavit, qui et verba audivit, et cor inspexit.* Yet the earnestness of the man's rejoinder, "*Sir, come down ere my son die,*" is very unlike this; nor would such have carried away a blessing at the last.

† Gregory the Great (*In Ev. Hom. xxviii.*): *Minus itaque in illum credidit, quem non putavit posse salutem dare, nisi præsens esset in corpore.*

son is to be healed ; he cannot raise himself to the height of those words of the Psalmist, “ He *sent* his word, and He healed them.”\*

And yet if there be rebuke in the Lord’s answer, there is encouragement too ; an implied promise of a miracle, even while the man is blamed, that he needed a miracle, that less than this would not induce him to put his trust in the Lord of life.† And so he accepts it ; for reading no repulse by this word of a seeming, and indeed of a real, severity, he only urges his suit the more earnestly, “ *Sir, come down, ere my child die;*”—still, it is true, he links help to the bodily presence of the Lord ; is still far off from his faith and humility who said, “ Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof ; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Much less does he dream of a power that could raise the dead : “ *Come down, ere my child die;*” Christ might heal his sick ; he does not dream of Him as one who could raise his dead. A faith so weak must be strengthened, and can only be strengthened through being proved. Such a gracious purpose of at once proving and strengthening it we trace in the Lord’s dealing with the man which follows. He does not come down with him, as he had prayed ; but sends him away with a mere word of assurance that it should go well with his child : “ *Go thy way ; thy son liveth.*”\* And the nobleman was contented with that assur-

\* Bengel will have this to be the especial point of the whole answer, laying the entire emphasis thus : “ Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe : ” Innuit Jesus se etiam absenti reguli filio posse vitam dare ; et postulat ut regulus id credat, neque profecitionem Jesu postulet suscipiendam cum ipso sanationem apud lectulum visuro. Others have done the same : see Köcher, *Analecta* (in loc.).

† Simul autem miraculum promittitur, fidesque prius etiam desideratur, et dum desideratur, excitatur. Responsum externâ quâdam repulsæ specie et tacitâ opis promissione mixtum, congruit sensui rogantis ex fide et imbecillitate mixto.

‡ *Karáþηθι*, Capernaum lying upon the shore, and lower than Cana, where now they were.

ance; he “believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way,” expecting to find that it should be done according to that word. The miracle was a double one —on the body of the absent child; on the heart of the present father; one cured of his sickness, the other of his unbelief.

A comparison of the Lord’s dealing with this man and with the centurion of the other Gospels is instructive. He has not men’s persons in admiration, who will not come, but only *sends* to the son of this nobleman (cf. 2 Kin. v. 10, 11), Himself visiting the servant of that centurion.\* And there is more in the matter than this. Here, being entreated to come, He does not; but sends his healing word; there, being asked to speak at a distance that word of healing, He rather proposes Himself to come; for here, as Chrysostom explains it well, a narrow and poor faith is enlarged and deepened, there a strong faith is crowned and rewarded. By not going He increases this nobleman’s faith; by offering to go He brings out and honours that centurion’s humility.

“*And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, Thy son liveth.*” Though faith had not struck its roots quickly in his soul, it would appear to have struck them strongly at last. His confidence in Christ’s word was so great, that he proceeded leisurely homewards: it was not till the next day that he approached his house, though the distance between the two cities was not so great that the journey need have occupied many hours; “he that believeth shall not make haste.” “*Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend,*”† to be a little better; for at the height of his faith the father had looked only for a slow and gradual

\* Thus the *Opus Imperf. in Matt. Hom.* xxii.: Illum ergo contempsit, quem dignitas sublevabat regalis; istum autem honoravit, quem conditio humiliabat servilis.

† Κομψότερον ἔσχε = meliuscule se habuit. Κομψός from κομέω, —so in Latin, *comptus*, for adorned in any way. Thus in Arrian (*Diss. Epict.* iii. 10) κομψῶς ἔχεις = belle habes (Cicero) are the words of the physician to his patient that is getting better.

amendment. “*And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.*” It was not merely, they would imply, that at the hour they name there was a turning-point in the disorder, and the violence of the fever abated; but it left\* and forsook him† altogether. “*So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth :‡ and himself believed and his whole house.*” This he did for all the benefits which the Lord had bestowed on him, he accepted another and the crowning benefit, even the cup of salvation; and not he alone; but, as so often happened, his conversion drew after that of all who belonged to him; for by consequences such as these God will bring us into a consciousness of the manner in which not merely the great community of mankind, but each smaller community, a nation, or as in this case a family, is united and bound together under its federal head, shares in his good or in his evil (cf. Acts xvi. 15, 34; xviii. 8§).

But did he not believe before? Was not this healing itself a gracious reward of his faith? Yes, he believed that particular word of the Lord’s; but this is something more, of faith, the entering into the number of Christ’s disciples, the

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\* Ammonius (*in Catena*): Οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς, οὐδὲ ὡς ἔπιχεν, ἀπηλλάγη τῆς ἀσθενείας τὸ παιδίον, ἀλλ’ ἀθρόον, ὡς φαίνεσθαι μὴ φύσεως ἀκολουθίαν εἶναι τὸ θαῦμα, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐνέργειας τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

† So it was plainly in the case of Simon’s wife’s mother; for at Christ’s word, “*immediately she arose and ministered unto them*” (Luke iv. 39); and there exactly the same phrase (*ἀφῆκεν αὐτήν*) is used.

‡ A beautiful remark of Bengel’s: *Quo curatius divina opera et beneficia considerantur, eo plus nutrimenti fides acquirit.*

§ The Jews have their miracle, evidently founded upon, and in rivalry of, this. Vitrunga (*De Synag.* p. 147) quotes it: Quando ægrotavit filius R. Gamalielis, duos misit studiosos sapientiae ad R. Channa, Dusæ filium, ut per preces pro eo gratiam divinam implorarent. Postquam eos vidiit, ascendit in cœnaeculum suum, Deumque pro eo oravit. Ubi vero descendit, dixit, Abite, quia febris illum jam dereliquit. . . Illi vero considentes, signate annotârunt illam horam, et quando reversi sunt ad R. Gamalielem, dixit ipsis, Per cultum! Nee excessu nec defectu temporis peccâstis, sed sic prorsus factum: eâ enim ipsâ horâ dereliquit ipsum febris, et petiit a nobis aquam potandam. Cf. Lampe, *Com. in Joh.* vol. i. p. 813.

giving of himself to Him as to the promised Messiah. Or, admitting that he already truly believed, there may be indicated here a heightening and augmenting of his faith. For faith may be true, and yet most capable of this increase. In him who cried, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark ix. 24), faith was indeed born, though as yet its actions were weak and feeble. After and in consequence of the first miracle of the water made wine, Christ's "disciples *believed on Him*" (John ii. 11), who yet, being disciples, must have believed on Him already.\* Apostles themselves exclaim, "Lord, *increase our faith*" (Luke xvii. 5). The Israelites of old, who followed Moses through the Red Sea, must have already believed that he was the instrument of God for their deliverance; yet of them it is written after the great overthrow of Pharaoh and his host, that they "believed the Lord, and his servant Moses" (Exod. xiv. 31). Compare 1 Kin. xvii. 24, where, after the mighty work which Elijah did, raising the widow's son, she addresses him thus: "Now *by this* I know thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Knowing him for such before (ver. 18), she now received a new confirmation of her faith (cf. John xi. 15; xiii. 19); and so we may accept it here. Whether, then, we understand that faith was first born in him now, or, being born already, received now a notable increase, it is plain from either result that the Lord by those words of his, "*Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe,*"† could

\* Beda: Unde datur intelligi et in fide gradus esse, sicut et in aliis virtutibus, quibus est initium, incrementum, et perfectio. Hujus ergo fides initium habuit, cum filii salutem petiit: incrementum, cum credidit sermoni Domini dicentis, Filius tuus vivit; deinde perfectionem obtinuit, nuntiantibus servis.

† This passage and Matthew xii. 38-40; xvi. 1-4, are favourites with those who deny that Christ laid any special stress on his miracles, as proving his divine mission and authority. Those others have been stretched into proofs that He did not even *claim* to do any. Thus by the modern rationalists, though the abuse of the passage is as old as Aquinas, who takes note of and rebukes it. But our Lord's words there have no such meaning; He does not deny the

not have intended to cast any slight on miracles, as a mean whereby men may be brought to the truth ; or having been brought to it, are more strongly established and confirmed in the same.

Before leaving this miracle, there is one question which will claim a brief discussion, namely, whether this is the same history as that of the servant (*παῖς*) of the centurion, related by St. Matthew (viii. 5) and St. Luke (vii. 2), and here repeated with only immaterial variations. It would almost seem as if Irenæus\* had thought so ; and there were certainly those in the time of Chrysostom who identified the two miracles. Not, however, Chrysostom himself, who properly rejects this rolling up of the two narratives into one. There is nothing to warrant it, almost nothing to render it in the least plausible. Not merely the external circumstances are widely different ; the scene of that miracle being Capernaum, of this Cana ; the centurion there a heathen, the nobleman here a Jew (for had he been other, it could not have past unnoticed) ; that suppliant pleading for his servant, this for his son ; thereby others, in person here ; the sickness there a paralysis, a fever here ; but more decisive than all this, the heart and inner kernel of the two narratives is different. That centurion is an example of a strong faith, this nobleman of a weak faith ; that centurion counts that if Jesus will but speak the word, his servant will be healed, while this nobleman is so earnest that the Lord should come down, because in heart he

value of miracles, nor say that He will do none ; but only that He will do none *for them*, for an evil and adulterous generation, which is seeking, not after helps and confirmations of faith, but excuses and subterfuges for unbelief. These works of grace and power are reserved for those who are receptive of impressions from them. They are seals which are to seal softened hearts ; hearts utterly cold and hard would take no impression from them, and therefore shall not be tried with them.

\* *Con. Hær.* ii. 22 : *Filiū centurionis absens verbo curavit dicens, Vade, filius tuus vivit.* Yet *centurionis* may well be only a slip of the pen or of the memory. In modern times only Semler, that I know, has held the same opinion.

limits his power, and counts that nothing but his actual presence will avail to help his sick; that other is praised, this rebuked of the Lord. So striking indeed are these differences, that Augustine\* not without good reason compares, but for the purpose of contrasting, the faith of that centurion and the unbelief of this nobleman. Against all this, the points of likeness, and suggesting identity, are very slight and superficial; as the near death of the sufferer, the healing at a distance and by a word, and the returning and finding the sick well. It is nothing strange that two miracles should have such circumstances as these in common.

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\* *In Ev. Joh. tract. xvi.*: Videlte distinctionem. Regulus iste Dominum ad domum suam descendere cupiebat; ille centurio indignum se esse dicebat. Illi dicebatur, Ego veniam, et curabo eum: huic dictum est, Vade, filius tuus vivit. Illi præsentiam promittebat, hunc verbo sanabat. Iste tamen præsentiam ejus extorquebat, ille se præsentiâ ejus indignum esse dicebat. Hic cessum est elationi; illuc concessum est humilitati. Cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. xxxv. in Joh.*

### 3. THE FIRST MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

LUKE v. 1-11.

THERE have been in all times those who have deemed themselves bound to distinguish the incident here narrated from that recorded in St. Matthew (iv. 18) and St. Mark (i. 16-20). Augustine,\* for example, finds the differences so considerable, that he can only suppose the event told by St. Luke to have first happened; our Lord then predicting to Peter that hereafter he should *catch men*, but not at that time summoning him to enter on the work; who therefore with his fellows continued for a season in their usual employments; until on a somewhat later occasion, that of which the two earlier Evangelists have preserved a record, they heard the word of command, "Follow Me," which they then at once obeyed, and attached themselves for ever to their heavenly Lord.

Now certainly the existence of some difficulties, yet such as hardly deserve that name, in the bringing to a perfect agreement of the two accounts, every one will readily admit. But surely the taking refuge at once and whenever these occur, in the assumption that events almost similar to one another, with only slight and immaterial variations, happened to the same people two or three times over, is a very ques-

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\* *De Cons. Evang.* ii. 17: Unde datur locus intelligere eos ex capturâ piscium ex more remeūsse, ut postea fieret quod Matthæus et Marcus narrant. . . . Tunc enim non subductis ad terram navibus tanquam curâ redeundi, sed ita eum secuti sunt, tanquam vocantem ac jubentem ut cum sequerentur. Mr. Greswell in the same way (see his *Dissert.* vol. ii. Diss. 9) earnestly pleads for the keeping asunder of the two narrations. Yet any one who wishes to see how capable they are, by the expenditure of a little pains, of being exactly reconciled, has only to refer to Spanheim's *Dub. Evang.* vol. iii. p. 337. With him agree Lightfoot (*Harmony*), Grotius, and Hammond, who see in all these records only one and the same event.

tionable way of escape from embarrassments of this kind ; will hardly satisfy one who honestly asks himself whether he would be content in any other case with such a method of bringing together the records, in slight matters apparently conflicting, of any other events. In the extreme unlikelihood that events should thus repeat themselves a far more real difficulty is created, than any which it is sought to evade. If we only consider the various aspects, various yet all true, in which the same incident will present itself from different points of view to different witnesses, keep in mind how very few points in a complex circumstance any narrative whatever can seize, least of all a written one, which in its very nature is limited ; and it will cause little wonder that two or three relators have in part seized diversely the culminating points of a story, have brought out different moments of an event. Rather we shall be grateful to that providence of God, which thus often sets us not merely in the position of one bystander, but of many ; which allows us to regard the acts of Christ, every side of which is significant, from many sides ; to hear of his discourses not merely so much as one disciple took in and carried away, but also that which sunk especially deep into the heart and memory of another.

A work exclusively devoted to the miracles of our Lord has only directly to do with the narrative of St. Luke, for in that only the miracle appears. What followed upon the miracle, the effectual calling of four Apostles, appears in the two parallel narratives as well—St. Luke's narrative excellently completing theirs, and explaining to us why the Lord, when He bade these future heralds of his grace to follow Him, should have clothed the promise which went with the command in that especial shape, "*I will make you fishers of men.*" These words would any how have had their propriety, addressed to fishers whom He found casting their nets, and unconsciously prophesying of their future work;\* yet they

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\* *Auct. Oper. Imperf. in Matth. Hom. vi.: Futuræ dignitatis gratiam*

win a peculiar fitness, after He has just shown them what successful fishers of the mute creatures of the sea He could make them, if only they would be obedient to his word. Linking, as was so often his custom, the higher to the lower, and setting forth that higher in the forms of the lower, He thereupon bids them to exchange the humility of their earthly for the dignity of a heavenly calling ; which yet He contemplates as a fishing still, though not any more of fish, but of men, whom at his bidding, and under his auspices, they should embrace not less abundantly in the meshes of their spiritual net.

But when we compare John i. 40-42, would it not appear as though three of these four, Andrew and Peter certainly, and most likely John himself (ver. 35), had been already called ? No doubt they had then, on the banks of Jordan, been brought into a transient fellowship with their future Lord ; but, after that momentary contact, had returned to their ordinary occupations, and only at this later period attached themselves finally and fully to Him, following Him whithersoever He went.\* This miracle most likely it was, as indeed seems intimated at ver. 8, which stirred the very depths of their hearts, giving them such new insights into the glory of Christ's person, as prepared them to yield themselves without reserve to his service. Certainly every thing here bears evidence that not now for the first time He and they have met. So far from their betraying no previous familiarity, or even acquaintance, with the Lord, as some have affirmed, Peter, in calling him "*Master*," and saying, "*Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net*," implies that he had already received impressions of his power, and of the authority which went with his words. Moreover, the

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artificii sui opere prophetantes. Augustine (*Serm. In edl., Serm. lviii.*) : Petrus piscator non posuit retia, sed mutavit.

\* It is often said that the other was, *Vocatio ad notitiam et familiaritatem*, or, *ad fidem* ; this, *ad apostolatum*. See the remarks of Scultetus, *Crit. Sac.* vol. vi. p. 1956.

two callings, a first and on this a second, are quite in the manner of that divine Teacher, who would hasten nothing, who was content to leave spiritual processes to advance as do the natural; who could bide his time, and did not expect the full corn in the ear the day after He had sown the seed in the ground. On that former occasion He cast the seed of his word in the hearts of Andrew and Peter; which having done, He left it to germinate, till now returning He found it ready to bear the ripe fruits of faith. Not that we need therefore presume such gradual processes *in all*. But as some statues are cast in a mould and at an instant, others only little by little hewn and shaped and polished, as their material, metal or stone, demands the one process or the other, so are there, to use a memorable expression of Donne's, "*fusile Apostles*" like St. Paul, whom one and the same word from heaven, as a lightning flash, at once melts and moulds; and others who by a more patient process, here a little and there a little, are shaped and polished into that perfect image, which the Lord, the great master-sculptor, will have them to assume.

*"And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.\* And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out*

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\* It is not unprofitably remarked by a mystic writer of the Middle Ages, that this their washing and repairing (Matt. iv. 21) of their nets, after they had used them, ought ever to be imitated by all "*fishers of men*," after they have cast in *their* nets for a draught; meaning by this that they should seek carefully to purify and cleanse themselves from aught which in that very act they may have gathered of sin, impurities of vanity, of self-elation, or of any other kind; and that this they must do, if they would use their nets effectually for a future draught.

*into the deep, and let down your nets\* for a draught."* This He says, designing Himself, the meanwhile, to take the fisherman in *his* net. For He, who by the foolish things of the world would confound the wise, and by the weak things of the world would confound the strong,† who meant to draw emperors to Himself by fishermen, and not fishermen by emperors, lest his Church should even seem to stand in the wisdom and power of men rather than of God—He saw in these simple fishermen of the Galilæan lake the fittest instruments for his work.‡ “*And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night,§ and have taken nothing;*” but, with the beginnings of no weak faith already working within him, he adds, “*nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net*”—for these must not be regarded as words of one despairing of the issue; who, himself expecting nothing, would yet, to satisfy the Master, and to prove to Him the fruitlessness of further efforts, comply with his desire.|| They

\* Here more generally δίκτυον, from the old δικεῦν (which appears again in δίσκος, a quoit), to throw; but at Matt. iv. 18; Mark i. 16, it is specialized as the ἀμφιβληστρον (=ἀμφιβολή), the casting net, as its derivation from ἀμφιβάλλω plainly shows; in Latin, funda or jaculum. Its circular bell-like shape adapted it to the office of a mosquito net, to which Herodotus (ii. 95) tells us the Egyptian fishermen turned it; but see Blakesley, *Herodotus* (in loc.).

† Compare with this the call of the prophet Amos: “I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son, but I was a herdman and a gatherer of sycomore fruit; and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel” (vii. 14, 15, cf. 1 Kin. xix. 19).

‡ See Augustine, *Serm. ccclxxxi.*

§ See Lampe (*Comm. in Joh.* vol. iii. p. 727) for passages in proof of this, which indeed is familiar to us all. Add this from Pliny (*H. N.* ix. 23): Vagantur gregatim fere ejusque generis squamosi. Capiuntur ante solis ortum: tum maxime piscium fallitur visus. Noctibus, quies: et illustribus æque, quam die, cernunt. Aiunt et si teratur gurses, interesse capturæ: itaque plures secundo tractu capi, quam primo.

|| Maldonatus: Non desperatione felicioris jactūs hoc dicit Petrus, aut quod Christo vel non credit, vel obediens nolit: sed potius ut majorem in Christo fidem declarat; quod cum totā nocte laborantes nihil prehendisset, tamen ejus confidens verbis, iterum retia laxaret.

are spoken rather in the spirit of the Psalmist: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. cxxvii. 1); as one who would say, "We have accomplished nothing during all the night, and had quite lost hope of accomplishing any thing; but now, when Thou biddest, we are sure our labour will not any longer be in vain." And his act of faith is abundantly rewarded; "*And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes,*" so many indeed, that "*their net brake,\* and they beckoned to their partners in the other ship, that they should come and help them.*"

It was not merely that Christ by his omniscience *knew* that now there were fishes in that spot. We may not thus extenuate the miracle. Rather we should contemplate Him as the Lord of nature, able, by the secret yet mighty magic of his will, to guide and draw the unconscious creatures, and make them minister to the higher interests of his kingdom. He appears here as the ideal man, the second Adam, in whom are fulfilled the words of the Psalmist: "Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet, . . . . . the fowl of the air, *and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea*" (Ps. viii. 6, 8). Of all this dominion bestowed on man at the first, there is perhaps no part which has so entirely escaped him as that over the fishes in the sea; but He who "was with the wild beasts" in the wilderness (Mark i. 13), who gave to his disciples power to "take up serpents" (Mark xvi. 18), declared here that the fishes of the sea no less than the beasts of the earth were obedient to his will. Yet since the power by which He drew them to that spot is the same that at all times guides their periodic migra-

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\* On the nets breaking now, and not breaking, as it is expressly said they did not, on occasion of the second miraculous draught of fishes (John xxi. 11), and the mystical meaning which has been found in this, I would refer the reader to what there will be said.

tions, which, *marvellous* as it is, we yet cannot call *miraculous*, there is plainly something that differences this miracle and that other of like kind (John xxi. 6), to which we may add that of the stater in the fish's mouth (Matt. xvii. 27), from Christ's other miracles,—in that these three are not coming in of a new and hitherto unwonted power into the region of nature; but they are *coincidences, divinely brought about*, between words of Christ and facts in that world of nature. An immense haul of fishes, or a piece of money in the mouth of one, are themselves no miracles;\* but the miracle lies in the falling in of these with a word of Christ's, which has pledged itself to this coincidence beforehand. The natural is lifted up into the miraculous by the manner in which it is timed, and, we must also add, by the ends which it is made to serve.†

*“And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.”*‡ It was a moment of fear, though not chiefly, or at all, upon this account; but rather because Peter and his fellows now through this sign became aware of something in the Lord which they had not perceived before, which filled them with astonishment and awe. And Peter, who while drawing the multitude of fishes into his net, has himself fallen into the net of Christ,§ while taking a prey, has himself also

\* Thus Yarrell (*Hist. of British Fishes*, vol. i. p. 125) : “At Brighton in June 1808, the shoal of mackerel was so great, that one of the boats had the meshes of her nets so completely occupied by them that it was impossible to drag them in. The fish and nets therefore in the end sunk together.”

† See page 13.

‡ *Bυθίζεσθαι.* The word occurs once besides in the N. T., and then in a tropical sense (1 Tim. vi. 9).

§ The author of a striking sermon, numbered ccv. in the Benedictine *Appendix* to St. Augustine: *Dum insidiatur Petrus gregibus aquoris, ipse in retia incidit Salvatoris. Fit de prædone præda, de piscatore piscatio, de piratâ captivitas.*—“Admire,” exclaims Chrysostom, “the dispensation of the Lord, how He draws each by the art which is most familiar and natural to him—as the Magians by a star, so the fishermen by fish”—a thought which Donne in a sermon on this text enlarges thus: “The Holy Ghost speaks in such forms and

been taken a prey, the same man that he ever afterward appears, as impetuous, yielding as freely to the impulse of the moment, with the beginnings of the same quick spiritual insight out of which he was the first to recognize under his human disguise the eternal Son of God, and to confess to Him as such (Matt. xvi. 16), could no longer, in the deep feeling of his own unholiness, endure a Holy One so near, but "*fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken.*" At moments like these all that is merely conventional is swept away, and the deep heart utters itself, and the deepest things that are there come forth to the light. And the deepest thing in man's heart under the law is this sense of God's holiness as something bringing death and destruction to the unholy creature. "Let not God speak with us, lest we die;" this was the voice of the people to Moses, as "they removed and stood afar off" (Exod. xx. 18, 19). "We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judg. xiii. 22; cf. vi. 22, 23; Dan. x. 17; Isai. vi. 5). Below this is the utterly profane state, in which there is no contrast, no contradiction felt between the holy and the unholy, between God and the sinner. Above it is the state of grace; in which all the contradiction is felt, God is still a consuming fire, but not any more for the sinner, only for the sin. It is still felt, felt more strongly than ever, how deep a gulf separates between sinful man and a holy God; but felt at the

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such phrases as may most work upon them to whom He speaks. Of David, that was a shepherd before, God says, He took him to feed his people. To those Magi of the East, who were given to the study of the stars, God gave a star to be their guide to Christ at Bethlehem. To those who followed Him to Capernaum for meat, Christ took occasion by that to preach to them of the spiritual food of their souls. To the Samaritan woman whom He found at the well, He preached of the water of life. To these men in our text, accustomed to a joy and gladness when they took great or great store of fish, He presents his comforts agreeably to their taste, they should be fishers still. Christ makes heaven all things to all men, that He might gain all."

same time that this gulf has been bridged over, that the two can meet, that in One who shares with both they have already met. For his presence, though indeed the presence of God, is yet of God with his glory veiled ; whose nearness thus even sinful men may endure, and in that nearness may little by little be prepared for the glorious consummation, the open vision of the face of God ; for this, which would be death to the mere sinner, will be highest blessedness to him who had been trained for it by beholding for a while the mitigated splendours of the Incarnate Word, and in this beholding has been more and more changed into the same image, as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 18).

It would indeed have fared ill with Peter, had Christ taken him at his word, and departed from *him*, as He departed from others who made the same request (Matt. viii. 34; ix. 1), but made it, as it needs not to say, in quite a different spirit and temper from Peter's. He re-assures him first with that comfortable "*Fear not,*" which He so often had, and still so often has, to speak to the trembling and sin-convinced hearts of his servants (John vi. 20; Matt. xxviii. 5, 10; Luke xxiv. 8; Rev. i. 17). And that Peter may have the less need to fear, He announces to him the mission and the task which He has for him in store : "*From henceforth thou shalt catch men.*" We can regard these words no otherwise than as the inauguration of Peter and his fellows to the work of their Apostleship. Such an inauguration is seldom wanting to them who are called to any signal work in the kingdom of God ; an inauguration not formal, nor always in its outward accidents the same ; on the contrary, in these displaying an infinite richness and variety, such as reigns alike in the works of nature and of grace. But it always is the same in this, that God manifests Himself to his future prophet or Apostle, or other messenger, as He had never done before, and in the light of this manifestation the man recognizes his own weakness and guilt and corruption, as he had never done before, exclaims, "*I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue*"

(Exod. iv. 10), or “I cannot speak; for I am a child” (Jer. i. 6), or “I am a man of unclean lips” (Isai. vi. 5), or as here, “I am a sinful man;” falls on his face, sets his mouth in the dust, takes the shoes from off his feet; and then out of the depth of this humiliation rises up another man, a fit instrument for the work of God, such as he would have never been, if his earthly had not thus paled before God’s heavenly; if the garish sun of this world had not thus set in him, that the pure stars of the heavenly world might appear. The true parallels to this passage, contemplated as such an inauguration as this, are Exod. iv. 10-17; Isai. vi.; Jer. i. 4-10; Ezek. i.-iii.; Judg. vi. 11-23; Acts ix. 3-9; Dan. x.

The Lord clothes his promise in the language of that art which was familiar to Peter; the fisherman is to *catch* men, as David, the shepherd, taken from among the sheep-folds, was to *feed* them\* (Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72). There is here a double magnifying of Peter’s future occupation as compared with its past; it is *men* and not poor fishes which henceforth he shall take; and he shall take them *for life*, and not, as he had taken his meaner prey, only for death; for no less is involved in the word of the original.† The word thus turns

\* Origen finds in St. Paul’s handicraft a like prophecy of his future vocation. The tent-maker shall become the maker of everlasting tabernacles (*In Num. Hom.* xvii.): Unde mihi videtur non fortuito contigisse ut Petrus quidem et Andreas et filii Zebedaei, arte piscautores invenirentur, Paulus vero arte faber tabernaculorum. Et quia illi vocati ab arte capiendorum piscium, mutantur et fiunt piscautores hominum, dicente Domino; Venite post me, et faciam vos piscautores hominum: non dubium quin et Paulus, quia et ipse per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum vocatus apostolus est, simili artis sue transformatione mutatus sit: ut sicut illi ex piscautoribus. piscium, piscautores hominum facti sunt, ita et iste a faciendis tabernaculis terrenis, ad cœlestia tabernacula construenda tralatus sit. Construit enim cœlestia tabernacula docens unumquemque viam salutis, et beatorum in cœlestibus mansionum iter ostendens.

† Ζωγρέειν, from ζωός and ἀγρέω, to take alive (Num. xxxi. 15; Deut. xx. 16; Josh. ii. 13, LXX); and ζωγρεία, the prey which is saved alive (Num. xxi. 35; Deut. ii. 24). Cf. Homer, *Il.* ζ, ver. 46, where one pleading for his life exclaims,

Zώγρει, Ἀτρεὸς νιὲ, σὺ δ' ἄξια δέξαι ἀποστά.

of itself the edge of Julian's malignant sneer,\* who observed that "the Galilæan" did indeed most aptly term his Apostles "fishers;" for as the fisherman draws out his prey from the waters where they were free and happy, to an element in which they cannot breathe, but must presently expire, even so did these.† But the word selected, and we must presume that it found its equivalent in the Aramaic, does with a singular felicity exclude and anticipate such a turn. Peter shall take men, and take them *for life*, not for death. Those that were wandering, restless and at random, through the deep unquiet waters of the world, full of whirlpools and fears, the smaller of them falling a prey to the greater,‡ and all with the

It appears as if the old Italic version took ζωγρέω in its other derivation (from ζωή and ἀγείρω), for we find the passage quoted by St. Ambrose and other early Fathers, Eris *viriſſans homines*; but in the Vulgate, Homines eris *eupicus*. See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. ζωγρέω.

\* His words, quoted by Theophanes (*Hom.* v.), are these: Ζωὴ μὲν τοῖς ἐνδροῖς τὸ ὑδωρ, θάνατος δὲ ὁ ἀήρ· εἰ δὴ τοῦτο ἔστιν ἀληθές, οἱ μαθητὰὶ ἄρα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀγρεύοντες διὰ τοῦ κηρύγματος, τῇ ἀπωλείᾳ καὶ τῷ θανάτῳ, ὡς τοὺς ἵχθυας, παραδιδόσαι. See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. ἀλιεύς. It was probably, as Origen supposes (*Con. Cels.* i. 62), from a confused remembrance of this passage that Celsus contemptuously styled the apostles "publicans and sailors" (*ναύτας*). But this inexactness is only of a piece with his ignorance even of the number of the Apostles; which was singular enough in one who undertook a formal refutation of Christianity.

† There is indeed an aspect in which the death of the fish, which follows on its being drawn out of the waters, has its analogy in the higher spiritual world. The man, drawn forth by these Gospel nets from the worldly sinful element in which before he lived and moved, does die to sin, die to the world; but only that out of this death he may rise to a higher life in Christ. This is brought out with much beauty by Origen (*Hom. vi. in Jērem.*): Ἐκεῖνοι οἱ ἵχθυες οἱ ἄλογοι ἀνελθόντες ἐν ταῖς σαγήναις ἀποθνήσκουσι θάνατον, οὐχὶ διαδεχομένης ζωῆς τὸν θάνατον ὁ δὲ συλληφθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλιέων Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἀνελθὼν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀποθνήσκει, ἀποθνήσκει δὲ τῷ κόσμῳ, ἀποθνήσκει τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, ζωοποιεῖται ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει ἄλλην ζωῆν.

‡ Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* lxiv. 6): Mare enim in figurâ dicitur seculum hoc, falsitate amarum, procellis turbulentum: ubi homines cupiditatibus perversis et pravis facti sunt velut pisces invicem se devorantes. Ambrose: Et bene apostolica instrumenta piscandi retia sunt; quae noui captos perimunt, sed reservant, et de profundo ad lumen extrahunt, et fluctuantes de infernis ad superna perduoant.

weary sense as of a vast prison, he shall gather and embrace within the safe folds and recesses of the same Gospel net;\* which if they break not through, nor leap over, they shall at length be drawn up to shore, out of the dark gloomy waters into the bright clear light of day, and shall there and then be collected into vessels for eternal life (Matt. xiii. 48).

It is not for nothing that the promise here clothes itself in language drawn from the occupation of the fisher, rather, for instance, than in that borrowed from the nearly allied pursuits of the hunter. The fisher more often takes his prey alive; he draws it *to* him, does not drive it *from* him;† and

\* Augustine (*Serm. Inedd. Serm. lix.* ): Nām sicut rete quos cōntinet vagari non patitur, ita et fides errare, quos colligit, non permittit: et sicut ibi captos sinu quodam perducit ad navim, ita et hic congregatos gremio quodam deducit ad requiem. Yet this title of "fishers" itself also fails in part, and does not set out the *whole* character of the Christian ministry; indeed only two moments of it with any strength, the first and the last,—the bringing in to the Church, as the enclosing within the net, and the bringing safely to the final kingdom, as the landing of the net with its contents upon the shore (Matt. xiii. 48). All which is between it leaves unexpressed, and yields therefore in fitness and completeness, as in frequency of use, to the image borrowed from the work of the shepherd; as a consequence of which it has given us no such names as "pastor" and "flock" to enrich our Christian language. That of "shepherd" expresses exactly all which the term "fisher" leaves untouched, the habitual daily care for the members of Christ, his *peculium* in every sense, after they are brought into the fellowship of his Church. This title of "fisher" sets forth the work more of the ingathering of souls, the missionary activity; that of shepherd more the tending and nourishing of souls that have thus been ingathered. This, therefore, fitly comes the first: it was said to Peter, "*Thou shalt catch men*," before it was said to him, "*Feed my sheep*"; and each time a different commission, or at least a different side of the commission, is expressed; he shall be both evangelist and pastor.

† Spanheim (*Dub. Evang.* vol. iii. p. 350): Non *venatores* Dominus vocatos voluit, sed *piscatores*, non homines abigentes a se prædam, sed colligentes: and many other likenesses between the fisher and the minister of Christ he brings out. Yet the image still remains, even in the N. T., open to an opposite use; thus in the ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος of Jam. i. 14 are allusions to the fish *drawn* from its safe hiding places, and *enticed* by the tempting bait (δέλεαρ) to its destruction: cf. Hab. i. 14-17; Ezek. xxix. 4, 5.

not merely to himself, but draws all which he has taken to one another; even as the Church brings together the divided hearts, the fathers to the children, gathers into one fellowship the scattered tribes of men. Again, the work of the fisher is one of art and skill, not of force and violence;\* so that Tertullian† finds in this miracle a commencing fulfilment of Jer. xvi. 16, “Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them,” though indeed it

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\* So Ovid (*Halieut.*): *Noster in arte labor positus*: cf. 2 Cor. xii. 16: ὁ πάρχων πανούργος, δόλῳ ὑμᾶς ἔλαβον. And Augustine (*De Util. Jejun. ix.*) brings out the difference between the fisher and the hunter: Quare Apostoli neminem coegerunt, neminem impulerunt? Quia pis-  
cator est, retia mittit in mare, quod incurrerit, trahit. Venator autem sylvas cingit, sentes executit; terroribus undique multiplicatis cogit in retia. Ne haec eat, ne illuc eat: inde occurre, inde cæde, inde terre; non exeat, non effugiat. Thus hunting is most often an image used in malam partem: the oppressions of the ungodly are often described under images borrowed from thence (Ps. x. 9; xxxv. 7). Nimrod is “a mighty hunter before the Lord” (Gen. x. 9), where to think of any other hunting but a tyrannous driving of men before him is idle. Augustine has given the right meaning of the words (*De Civ. Dei*, xvi. 4): Quid significatur hoc nomine quod est venator, nisi animalium terrigenarum deceptor, oppressor, extinctor? Luther, in one of his *Letters*, speaks of a hunting party at which he was present: “Much it pitied me to think of the mystery and emblems which lieth beneath it. For what does this symbol signify, but that the Devil, through his godless huntsmen and dogs, the bishops and theologians to wit, doth privily chase and snatch the innocent poor little beasts? Ah, the simple and credulous souls came thereby far too plain before my eyes.” Yet it is characteristic that the hunting, in which is the greatest coming out of power, should of men be regarded as the noblest occupation; and thus we find it even in Plato, who (*De Legg.* vii. p. 823 E. cf. Plutarch, *De Sol. Anim.* 9) approves of it, while fishing he would willingly forbid as an ἀργὸς θῆρα and ἔρως οὐ σφόδρα ἐλευθέριος (Becker, *Charicles*, vol. i. p. 437).

† *Adv. Marc.* iv. 9: De tot generibus operum quid utique ad pis-  
caturam respexit ut ab illâ in Apostolos sumeret Simonem et filios  
Zebedaei? Non enim simplex factum videri potest, de quo argu-  
mentum processurum erat, dicens Petro trepidanti de copiosâ inda-  
gine piscium: Ne time, alhinc enim homines eris capiens. Hoc  
enim dicto, intellectum illis suggerebat adimplatae prophetiae; se  
eum esse qui per Hieremiam pronuntiarat, Ecce ego mittam pisca-  
tores multos, et piscabuntur illos. Denique relictis naviculis sequuti  
sunt eum; ipsum intelligentes, qui cœperat facere quod edixerat. Cf.  
Cyril of Alexandria, in Cramer, *Catena*, who makes the same applica-  
tion of that verse from Jeremiah.

may very well be a question whether in those words there lies not rather a threat than a promise. It is, however, quite in the spirit of the new covenant to take a threatening of the old, and fulfil it, yet so to transform in the fulfilling, that it shall be no longer what it was, but wholly changed for the better. Thus, to fall into the hands of the Lord, would have been in the old time a woe, but it may now be the chiefest blessing; and in this manner Tertullian's application of the words may be justified. There is now a captivity which is blessed, blessed because it is deliverance from a freedom which is full of woe,—a “being made free from sin and becoming servants to God,” that so we may have our “fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. vi. 22). But the promise here might be brought with more unquestionable propriety into relation with Ezek. xlvi. 9, 10, and the prophecy there of the fishers that should stand on Engedi, and of the great multitude of fish with which the healed waters should abound.\*

And as the ministers of Christ are fishers, so the faithful are aptly likened to fish. This comparison, so great a favourite in the early Church, probably did not derive its first impulse from these words of our Lord; but rather from the fact that through the waters of baptism men are first quickened,† and can only live as they abide in that quickening element into which they were then brought. The two images cannot stand together, excluding as they mutually do one another; for in one the blessedness is to remain in the waters, as in the vivi-

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\* Theodoret gives rightly the meaning of the passage: Λέγει ἵχθυν πλῆρες τοῦτο γενήσεσθαι τὸ ὕδωρ· καὶ ἀλιέας ἔξειν πολλούς· πολλοὶ γὰρ οἱ διὰ τῶν ὑδάτων τούτων εἰς σωτηρίαν θηρώμενοι, πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ τὴν ἄγραν ταύτην θηρεύειν πεπιστευμένοι.

† Tertullian (*De Bapt.* i.): Sed nos piscieuli secundum ἵχθυν nostrum Jesum Christum in aquâ nascimur; nec aliter quam in aquâ permanendo salvi sumus. And Chrysostom on these words, “*I will make you fishers of men,*” exclaims, “Truly, a new method of fishing! for the fishers draw out the fishes from the waters, and kill those that they have taken. But we fling into the waters, and those that are taken are made alive.”

fying element, in the other to be drawn forth from them into the purer and clearer air. In one Christ is the Fish,\* in the other the chief Fisherman. As Himself this great Fisher of men He is addressed in that grand Orphic hymn attributed to the Alexandrian Clement, in words which may thus be translated :

“ Fisher of mortal men,  
All that the saved are,  
Ever the holy fish  
From the wild ocean  
Of the world’s sea of sin  
By thy sweet life Thou enticest away.”

“*And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him.*” But what was that “all” which “they forsook,” one might be tempted to ask, that they should afterwards make so much of it, saying, “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee: what shall we have therefore” (Matt. xix. 27)? Whatever it was, it was their *all*, and therefore, though it might have been but a few poor boats and nets, it was much; for a man may be holden by love to a miserable hovel with bands as fast as bind another to a sumptuous palace; seeing it is the worldly affection which holds him, and not the world; and the essence of forsaking lies not in the more or less which is renounced, but in the spirit in which the renunciation is carried out. These Apostles might have left little, when they left their *possessions*, but they left, and had a right to feel that they had left much, when they left their *desires*.†

\* Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xviii. 23), giving the well-known Greek anagram of ΙΧΘΥΣ, adds: In quo nomine mystice intelligitur Christus, eo quod in hujus mortalitatis abyso, velut in aquarium profunditate vivus, hoc est, sine peccato esse potuerit. In the chasing away of the evil spirit by the fish’s gall (Tob. viii. 2, 3), a type was often found in the early Church, of the manner in which, when Christ is near, the works of the devil are destroyed. Thus Prosper of Aquitaine: Christus . . . . piscis in suâ passione decoctus, cuius ex interioribus remediis quotidie illuminanur et pascimur.

† Augustine (*Enarr. iii. in Ps. ciii. 17*): Multum dimisit, fratres mei, multum dimisit, qui non solum dimisit quidquid habebat, sed etiam quidquid habere cupiebat. Quis enim pauper non turgescit in

A word or two here in conclusion may find place generally upon the symbolic acts of our Lord, whereof, according to his own distinct assurance, we here have one. The desire of the human mind to set forth the truth which it deeply feels in acts rather than by words, or it may be by blended act and word, has a very deep root in our nature, which always strives after the concrete; and it manifests itself not merely in the institution of *fixed* symbolic acts, as the anointing of kings, the breaking of a cake at the old Roman marriages, the giving and receiving of a ring at our own; but more strikingly yet, in acts that are the free products at the moment of some creative mind, which has more to utter than it can find words to be the bearers of, or would utter it in a more expressive and emphatic manner than these permit. This manner of teaching, however frequent in Scripture (1 Kin. ii. 30, 31; xxii. 11; Acts xiii. 51), yet belongs not to it alone, nor is it even peculiar to the East, although there it is most entirely at home; but everywhere, as men have felt strongly and deeply, and would fain make others feel so, they have had recourse to such a language as this, which has so many advantages for bringing home its truth through the eyes to the mind. When Hannibal, for instance, as he was advancing into Italy, set some of his captives to fight with one another,\* placing before them freedom and presents and rich armour for the victor, and at least escape from present extreme misery for the slain; who does not feel that he realized to his army the blessings which not victory alone, but even the other alternative of

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spem saeculi hujus? quis non quotidie cupit augere quod habet? Ista cupiditas praecisa est. Prorsus totum mundum dimisit Petrus, et totum mundum Petrus accipiebat. And Gregory the Great, following in the same line (*Hom. v. in Evang.*): Multum ergo Petrus et Andreas dimisit, quando uterque etiam desideria habendi dereliquit. Multum dimisit, qui cum re possessa etiam concupiscentiis renuntiavit. A sequentibus ergo tanta dimissa sunt quanta a non sequentibus concupisci potuerunt. Cf. Clemens of Alexandria, *Quis Dives Salvis?* 20, vol. ii. p. 946, Potter's ed.

\* Polybius, ii. 62.

death, would give them, in affording release from the intolerable evils of their present state, as words could never have done? Not otherwise Diogenes expressed his contempt for humanity by his noonday lantern more effectually than by all his scornful words he could ever have expressed it. As the Cynic philosopher, so too the Hebrew prophets, though in quite another temper, would oftentimes weave their own persons into such parabolic acts, would use themselves as a part of their own symbol; and this they would do, because nothing short of this would satisfy the earnestness with which the truth of God, whereof they desired to make others partakers, possessed their own souls (Ezek. xii. 1-12; Acts xxi. 11). And thus, too, not this only; but many actions of our Lord's were such an embodied teaching,\* the incorporation of a doctrine in an act, having a deeper significance than lay upon the surface, and being only entirely intelligible when we recognize in them a significance such as this (Matt. xxi. 18, 19; John xxi. 19). The deeds of Him who is the Word are themselves also words for us.†

\* Lampe: In umbrâ præmonstrabatur quam lœto successu in omni labore, quem in nomine Dei suscepturi essent, piscaturam præcipue mysticam inter gentes instituentes, gavisuri sint. Grotius, who is much readier to admit mystical meanings in Scripture than in general he is given credit for, be this for his praise or the contrary, finds real prophecy in many of the subordinate details here: Libenter igitur hinc veteres sequor, qui præcedentis historiæ hoc putant esse τὸ ἀληγορούμενον, Apostolos non suâp̄e industriâ sed Christi imperio ac virtute expansis Evangelii retibus tantam facturos capturam, ut opus habituri sint subsidiariâ multorum εὐαγγελιστῶν operâ; atque ita impletum iri non unam navem, Iudaeorum scilicet, sed et alteram gentium, sed quarum navium futura sit areta atque indivisa societas. Cyril of Alexandria (see Cramer, *Catena*, in loc.) had anticipated this; Augustine, *Serm. exxxvii. 2*; and Theophylact (in loc.); this last tracing further in the night during which they had "*taken nothing*," the time of the law, during which there was no kingdom of God, with all men pressing into it; nor until Christ was come, and had Himself given the word.

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xxiv.*): Nam quia ipse Christus Verbum est, etiam factum Verbi verbum nobis est. *Ep. cii. qu. 6:* Nam sicut humana consuetudo verbis, ita divinu potentia etiam factis loquitur.

#### 4. THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST.

MATT. viii. 23-27; MARK iv. 35-41; LUKE viii. 22-25.

THE three Evangelists who relate this history agree in placing it immediately before the healing of the possessed in the country of the Gadarenes. It was evening, the evening, probably, of that day on which the Lord had spoken all those parables recorded in Matt. xiii. (cf. Mark iv. 35), when, dismissing the multitude, He was fain to pass over to the other side of the lake, and so, for a little while, withdraw from the tumult and the press. With this intention, He was received by the disciples "*even as He was\* in the ship.*" But before the voyage was accomplished, a sudden and violent squall,† such as these small inland seas, surrounded with mountain gorges, are notoriously exposed to, descended on the bosom of the lake: and the ship which bore the Saviour of the world appeared to be in imminent peril, as, humanly speaking, no doubt it was; for these men, exercised to the sea many of them from their youth, and familiar with all the changes of that lake, would not have been terrified by the mere shadow of a danger. But though the danger was so real, and was ever growing more urgent, until "*the waves beat into the ship, so that now it was full,*" their Master, weary, it may be, with the toils of the day, continued sleeping still: He was, according to details which St. Mark alone has preserved, "*in the hinder part of the ship, asleep upon a pillow,*" and was not roused by all the tumult and confusion incident on such a moment. We behold in Him here exactly the reverse of Jonah (Jon. i. 5, 6); the fugitive prophet

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\* Ως ἦν, probably, sine ullo ad iter apparatu.

† Σεισμός, which is generally an *earthquake* (so Matt. xxiv. 7); in Mark and Luke, λαλαψ, which is defined by Hesychius, ἀνέμον συστροφὴ μεθ' ὑετοῦ, a squall.

asleep in the midst of a like danger through a dead conscience, the Saviour out of a pure conscience—Jonah by his presence making the danger, Jesus yielding the pledge and the assurance of deliverance from the danger.\*

But the disciples understood not this. It was long, we may believe, before they dared to arouse Him; yet at length the extremity of the danger overcame their hesitation, and they did so, not without exclamations of haste and terror; as is evidenced by the double “*Master, Master,*” of St. Luke. In St. Mark, they awaken Him with words almost of rebuke, as if He were unmindful of their safety, “*Master, carest Thou not that we perish?*” though in this their “*we*” they included their beloved Lord as well as themselves †. Then the Lord arose; from St. Matthew it would appear, first blaming their want of faith, and then pacifying the storm; though the other Evangelists make the blame not to have preceded, but to have followed, the allaying of the winds and waves. Probably it did both: He spoke first to them, quieting with a word the tempest in their bosoms; and then, having allayed the tumult of the outward elements, He again turned to them, and more

\* Jerome (*Comm. in Matth.* in loc.): *Hujus signi typum in Jonâ legimus, quando eeteris periclitantibus ipse securus est et dormit et suscitatur: et imperio ac sacramento passionis suae liberat susciantes.*

† On the different exclamations of fear which the different Evangelists put into the mouth of the disciples, Augustine says excellently well (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 24): *Una eademque sententia est excitantium Dominum, volentiumque salvati: nee opus est quærere quid horum potius Christo dictum sit. Sive enim aliquid horum trium dixerint, sive alia verba quæ nullus Evangelistarum commemoravit, tantumdem tamen valentia ad candem sententiae veritatem, quid ad rem interest?* And presently after (28): *Per hujusmodi Evangelistarum locutiones varias, sed non contrarias, rem plane utilissinam discimus et pernecessariam; nihil in cuiusqne verbis nos debere inspicere, nisi voluntatem, cui debent verba servire: nee mentiri quemquam, si aliis verbis dixerit quid ille voluerit, eius verba non dicit; ne miseri auctipes vocum, apicibus quodammodo literarum putent ligandam esse veritatem, cum utique non in verbis tantum, sed etiam in ceteris omnibus signis animorum, non sit nisi ipse animus inquirendus.* Cf. 66, in fine.

deliberately blamed their lack of faith in Him.\* Still let it be observed that He does not, according to St. Matthew, call them "*without faith*," but "*of little faith*;" and St. Mark's, "*How is it ye have no faith?*" must be modified and explained by the milder rebuke recorded in the other Evangelists. They were not wholly *without* faith; for, believing in the midst of their unbelief, they turned to Christ in their fear. They had faith, but it was not quick and lively; it was not at hand, as the Lord's question, "*Where is your faith?*" (Luke viii. 25) sufficiently implies. They had it, as the weapon which a soldier has, but cannot lay hold of at the moment when he needs it the most. Their sin lay not in seeking help of Him; for this indeed became them well; but in the *excess* of their terror, "*Why are ye so fearful?*"† in their counting it possible that the ship which bore their Lord could ever truly perish.

"*Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.*" Cæsar's confidence that the bark which contained him and his fortunes could not sink, forms the earthly counterpart to the heavenly calmness and confidence of the Lord. We must not miss the force of that word "*rebuked*," preserved by all three Evangelists; and as little the direct address to the furious elements, "*Peace, be still,*"‡ which St. Mark only records. To regard this as a mere oratorical personification would be absurd; rather is there here, as Maldonatus truly remarks, a distinct tracing up of all the discords and disharmonies in the outward world to their source in a person, a referring them back to him, as to their

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\* Theophylact: Πρῶτον παύσας τὸν χειμῶνα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτῶν, τότε λένε καὶ τὸν τῆς θαλάσσης.

† O ὅτω δειλοί, on which words Calvin: Quā particulā notat eos extra modum pavescere; . . . quenlibet vero timorem non esse fidei contrarium, inde patet, quod si nihil metuimus, obrepit supina carnis securitas.

‡ Σύπα, πεφύμωσο. We may compare Ps. civ. 9: "He *rebuked* (ἐπετίμησε. LXX) the Red Sea also;" although there, as in a poem, the same stress cannot be laid on the word as here.

ultimate ground; even as this person can be no other than Satan, the author of all disorders alike in the natural and in the spiritual world. The Lord elsewhere “rebukes” a fever (Luke iv. 39), where the same remarks will hold good. Nor is this rebuke unheard or unheeded. For not willingly was the creature thus made “subject to vanity.” Constituted to be man’s handmaid at the first, it is only reluctantly, and submitting to an alien force, that nature rises up against him, and becomes the instrument of his hurt and harm. In the hour of her wildest uproar, she knew the voice of Him who was her rightful Lord, gladly returned to her allegiance to Him, and in this to her place of proper service to that race of which He had become the Head; and whose lost prerogatives He was reclaiming and reasserting once more.\* And to effect all this, his *word* alone was sufficient; He needed not, as Moses, to stretch a rod over the deep; He needed not, as his servant had needed, an instrument of power, apart from Himself, with which to do his mighty work (Exod. xiv. 16, 21, 27); but at his word only “*the wind ceased,† and there was a great calm.*”

The Evangelists proceed to describe the moral effect which this great wonder exercised on the minds of those that were in the ship;—it may be, also on those that were in the “*other little ships,*” which St. Mark has noted as sailing in their company: “*The men marvelled, saying, What manner of man*

\* A notable specimen of the dexterity with which a neological interpretation may be insinuated into a book of geography occurs in Röhr’s *Palästina*, p. 59, in many respects a useful manual of the Holy Land. Speaking of this lake, and the usual gentleness and calmness of its waters, he adds, that it is from time to time disturbed by squalls from the neighbouring hills, which yet “*last not long*, nor are very perilous (Matt. viii. 23-27).” What his reference to this passage means is at once clear, and may be seen more largely expressed in Kuinoel, or any other rationalist commentary, *in loco*.

† Ἐκόπασεν, as one ceases out of weariness (*κοπάζω*, from *κόπος*). Γαλήνη, probably not, as some propose, from γάλα, to express the soft milky colour of the calm sea, but from γελάω. So Catullus, describing the gently-stirred waters,—leni resonant plangore *cachinni*.

*is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"* an exclamation which only can find its answer in another exclamation of the Psalmist, "O Lord God of Hosts, who is like unto Thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them" (Ps. lxxxix. 8, 9\*). We see here, no doubt, the chief ethical purpose to which, in the providence of God who ordered all things for the glory of his Son, this miracle was intended to serve. It was to lead his disciples into thoughts ever higher and more awful of that Lord whom they served, more and more to teach them that in nearness to Him was safety and deliverance from every danger. The danger which exercised, should likewise strengthen, their faith,—who indeed had need of a mighty faith, since God, in St. Chrysostom's words, had chosen them to be the athletes of the universe.†

An old expositor has somewhat boldly said, "This power of the Lord's word, this admiration of them that were with Him in the ship, holy David had predicted in the psalm, saying, 'They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep'" (Ps. cvii. 23-30). And as in the spiritual world the inward is ever shadowed forth by the outward, we may regard this outward fact but as the clothing of

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Mare.* iv. 20): Quum transfretat, Psalmus expungitur. Dominus, inquit, super aquas multas [Ps. xxxix. 3]: quum undas freti discutit, Abaeue adimpletur, Dispurgens, inquit, aquas itinere [Hab. iii. 15]: quum ad minas ejus eliditur mare, Naum quoque absolvitur; Commixans, inquit, mari, et arefaciens illud [Nah. i. 4], utique cum ventis quibus inquietabatur.

† Bengel: Jesus habebat scholam ambulantem, et in eâ scholâ multo solidius instituti sunt discipuli, quam si sub tecto unius collegii sine ullâ solicitudine atque tentatione vixissent.—A circumstance which has perplexed some, that, apparently, the Apostles were never baptized, except some of them with John's baptism, has been by others curiously explained, that, as the children of Israel were baptized into Moses in the Red Sea (1 Cor. x. 2), so they were in this storm baptized into Christ. Tertullian (*De Bapt.* 12): Alii plane satis coacte injiciunt, tunc Apostolos baptismi vicem implèsserunt, quum in naviculâ fluctibus adspersi operti sunt.

an inward truth which in the language of this miracle the Lord declares unto men. He would set Himself forth as the true Prince of peace (Isai. ix. 6-9), as the speaker of peace to the troubled and storm-stirred heart of man, whether the storms that stir it be its own inner passions, or life's outward calamities and temptations. Thus Augustine, making application of all parts of the miracle: "We are sailing in this life as through a sea, and the wind rises, and storms of temptations are not wanting. Whence is this, save because Jesus is sleeping in thee? If He were not sleeping in thee, thou wouldest have calm within. But what means this, that Jesus is sleeping in thee, save that thy faith, which is from Jesus, is slumbering in thine heart? What shalt thou do to be delivered? Arouse Him, and say, Master, we perish. He will awaken; that is, thy faith will return to thee, and abide with thee always. When Christ is awakened, though the tempest beat into, yet it will not fill, thy ship; thy faith will now command the winds and the waves, and the danger will be over."\*

\* And again, *Ezrarr. in Ps. xciii. 19*: Si cessaret Deus, et non misereret amaritudines felicitatibus seculi, oblivisceceremur eum. Sed ubi angores molestiarum faciunt fluctus animæ, fides illa quæ ibi dormiebat, excitetur. Tranquillum enim erat, quando dormivit Christus in mari: illo dormiente, tempestas orta est, et cœperunt periclitari. Ergo in corde Christiano et tranquillitas erit et pax, sed quamdiu vigilat fides nostra: si autem dormit fides nostra, periclitamur. Sed quomodo illa navis cum fluctuaret, excitatus est Christus a fluctuantibus, et dicentibus, Domine, perimus: surrexit ille, imperavit tempestatibus, imperavit fluctibus, cessavit periculum, facta est tranquillitas; sic et te eum turbant concupiscentiae malæ, persuasiones malæ, fluctus sunt, tranquillabuntur. Jam desperas, et putas te non pertinere ad Dominum; Evigilet fides tua, excita Christum in corde tuo; surgente fide, jam agnoscis ubi sis; . . . . Evigilante Christo tranquilletur cor tuum, ut ad portum quoque pervenias. Thus again (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xl ix.*): Fides tua de Christo, Christus est in corde tuo. . . . Intrant venti cor tuum, utique ubi navigas, ubi hanc vitam tanquam procellosum et periculosum pelagus transis; intrant venti, movent fluctus, turbant navim. Qui sunt venti? Audisti convicium, irascieris: convicium ventus est, iraeundia fluctus est: periclitaris, disponis respondere, disponis maledictum maledicto reddere, jam navis propinquat naufragio; excita Christum dormientem. Ideo enim fluctuas, et mala pro malis reddere præparas, quia Christus dormit in

We shall do no wrong to the literal truth of this and other of Christ's miracles, by recognizing the character at once symbolic and prophetic, which, no doubt, many of them also bear, and this among the number. As the kernel of the old humanity, Noa and his family, was once contained in the Ark which was tossed upon the waves of the deluge, so the kernel of the new humanity, of the new creation, Christ and his Apostles, in this little ship. And the Church of Christ has evermore resembled this tempested bark, in that the waves of the world rage horribly around it, in that it has evermore been delivered out of the perils which seemed ready to overwhelm it,—and this because Christ is in it; who being roused by the cry of his servants, rebukes these winds and these waters, before they utterly overwhelm this ship.\* In

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navi. In corde enim tuo somnus Christi, oblivio fidei. Nam si excites Christum, id est, recolas fidem, quid tibi dicit tanquam vigilans Christus in corde tuo? Ego audivi, Daemonium habes, et pro eis oravi; audit Dominus et patitur; audit servus et indignatur. Sed vindicari vis. Quid enim, ego jam sum vindicatus? Cum tibi haec loquitur fides tua, quasi imperatur ventis et fluctibus, et sit tranquillitas magna. Cf. *Serm. Ixiii.*; *Enarr. in Ps. Iv. 8*; and *Enarr. ii. in I's. xxv. in init.*

\* Tertullian (*De Bapt. 12*): Cæterum navicula illa figuram Ecclesiæ præferebat, quod in mari, id est seculo, fluctibus, id est persecutionibus et temptationibus, inquietatur, Domino per patientiam velut dormiente, donec orationibus sanctorum in ultimis suscitatus, compescat seculum et tranquillitatem suis reddat. Ambrose: Arbor quædam in navi est crux in Ecclesiâ, quâ inter tot totius sæculi blanda et perniciosa naufragia incolumis sola servatur. Compare a passage of much beauty in the *Clementine Homilies* (Coteler. *Patt. Apostt.* vol. i. p. 609), beginning thus: "Εοικεν γὰρ ὅλον τὸ πράγμα τῆς ἐκκλησίας νηὶ μεγάλῃ, διὰ σφοδροῦ χειμῶνος ἄνδρας φερούσῃ ἐκ πολλῶν τόπων ὄντας, καὶ μὲν τιὰ ἀγαθῆς βασιλείας πόλιν οἰκεῖν θέλοντας, κ. τ. λ. The image of the world as a great ship, whereof God was at once the maker and the pilot, was familiar to the Indians (Philostratus, *De Vita Apollonii*, iii. 35; Von Bohlen, *Das Alte Indien*); and the same symbolic meaning lay in the procession of Egyptian priests bearing the sacred ship (the navigium auratum, Curtius, iv. 7), full of the images of the gods (Creuzer, *Symbolik*, vol. ii. p. 9, 3d edit.). All this was recognized in the early Christian art, where the Church is continually set forth as a ship, against which the personified winds are fighting (*Christl. Kunst-Symbolik*, p. 159). Aringhi describes an old seal-ring in which the Church appears as this ship, sustained and supported

the O. T., Ezekiel gives us a magnificent picture of a worldly kingdom under the image of a stately and gorgeous galley, which he describes with every circumstance that could heighten its glory and its beauty (xxvii. 4-9); but that ship with all its outward bravery and magnificence utterly perishes: “thy rowers have brought thee into great waters; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas,” and they that hoped in it, and embarked in it their treasures, wail over its wreck with a bitter wailing (ver. 26-36); this kingdom of God meanwhile, seeming by comparison but as the slight and unhonoured fishing-boat which any wave might engulf, rides triumphantly over all, and comes safely into haven at the last.

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by a great fish in the sea beneath (Christ the ΙΧΘΥΣ, according to Ps. lxxii. 17, Aquila), while on its mast and poop two doves are sitting; so that the three Clementine symbols, the ship, the dove, and the fish, appear here united in a single group.

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## 5. THE DEMONIACS IN THE COUNTRY OF THE GADARENES.

MATT. viii. 28-34; MARK v. 1-20; LUKE viii. 26-39.

THE consideration of this, the most important, and, in many respects, the most perplexing of all the demoniac cures in the N. T., will demand some prefatory remarks on the general subject of the demoniacs\* of Scripture. It is a subject of which the difficulty is very much enhanced by the fact that, as with some of the spiritual gifts, the gift of tongues, for example, the thing itself, if it still survives among us, yet does so no longer under the same name, nor with the same frequency and intensity as of old. We are obliged to put together, as best we can, the separate and fragmentary notices which have reached us, and must endeavour out of them to frame such a scheme as will answer the demands of the different phenomena; we have not, at least with certainty, the thing itself to examine and to question, before our eyes.

It is, of course, easy enough to cut short the whole inquiry, and to leave no question at all, by saying these demoniacs were persons whom we should call insane—epileptic, maniac, melancholic. This has been often said,† and the

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\* The most common name in Scripture for one thus possessed is δαιμονιζόμενος (Matt. iv. 24, and often). Besides this, δαιμονισθείς (Mark v. 18; Luke viii. 36); ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (Mark i. 23); ἔχων πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον (Acts viii. 7); ἔχων δαιμόνια (Luke viii. 27); ἄνθρωπος ἔχων πνέμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου (Luke iv. 33). Other more general descriptions, καταδυναστενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου (Acts x. 38); ὁχλούμενος ὑπὸ πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων (Luke vi. 18; Acts v. 16). In classic Greek, one under the power of an evil δαίμων was said δαιμονᾶν (*Eschylus, Choëphoræ*, 564), κακοδαιμονᾶν, and the state was called κακοδαιμονία, not being, however, precisely a similar condition.

† As by Semler in Germany, *Comm. de Daemoniis quorum in N. T. fit Mentio*, Halæ, 1770-1779; by Hugh Farmer in England, *Essay on the Demoniacs of the N. T.*, London, 1775.

oftener perhaps, because there is a partial truth in the assertion that these possessions were bodily maladies. There was no doubt a substratum of disease, which in many cases helped to lay open the sufferer to the deeper evil, and upon which it was superinduced :\* so that cases of possession are at once classed with those of various sicknesses, and at the same time distinguished from them, by the Evangelists; who thus at once mark the connexion and the difference (Matt. iv. 24; viii. 16; Mark i. 34). But the scheme which confounds these cases with those of disease, and, in fact, identifies the two, does not, as every reverent interpreter of God's word must own, exhaust the matter; it cannot be taken as a satisfying solution of the difficulties it presents; and this for more reasons than one.

And first, our Lord Himself uses language which is not reconcilable with any such theory; He everywhere speaks of demoniacs not as persons merely of disordered intellects, but as subjects and thralls of an alien spiritual might; He addresses the evil spirit as distinct from the man; "Hold thy peace, and come out of him" (Mark i. 25). And the unworthy reply, that He fell in with and humoured the notions of the afflicted in order to facilitate their cure,† is anticipated by the fact that in his most confidential discourses with his disciples He uses exactly the same language (Matt. x. 8; and especially xvii. 21, "This kind goeth not

\* Origen (*in Matth.* tom. xiii. 6) finds fault with some (*ιατροί* he calls them) who in his day saw in the youth mentioned Matt. xvii. 14, only one afflicted with the falling sickness. He himself runs into the opposite extreme, and will see no nature there, because they saw nothing but nature.

† Not to say that such treatment had been sure to fail. Schubert, in his book, full of wisdom and love, *Die Krankheiten und Störungen der menschlichen Seele*, several times observes how fatal all giving into a madman's delusions is for his recovery; how sure it is to defeat its own objects. He is living in a world of falsehood, and what he wants is not more falsehood, but some truth—the truth indeed in love, but still only the truth. And I know that the greatest physicians in this line in England act exactly upon this principle.

out but by prayer and fasting"\*\*). The allegiance we owe to Christ as the King of truth, who came, not to fall in with men's errors, but to deliver men out of their errors, compels us to believe that He would never have used language which would have upheld and confirmed so serious an error in the minds of men as the belief in satanic influences, which did not in truth exist. For this error, if it was an error, was so little an innocuous one, such as might be left to drop naturally away; did, on the contrary, reach so far in its consequences, entwined its roots so deeply among the very ground-truths of religion, that He would never have suffered it to remain at the hazard of all the misgrowths which it could not fail to occasion.

And then, moreover, even had not the moral interests at stake been so transcendent, our idea of Christ's absolute veracity, apart from the value of the truth which He communicated, our idea of Him as the *Verax*, no less than the *Verus* and the *Veritas*, forbids us to suppose that He could have spoken as He did, being perfectly aware all the while that there was no corresponding reality to justify the language which He used. And in this there is no making a conscience about trifles, nor any losing sight of that figurative nature of all our words, out of which it results that so much which is not *literally* true, is yet the truest, inasmuch as it conveys the truest impression,—no requiring of men to examine the etymologies of their words before they venture to use them. It would have been quite a different thing for the Lord to have fallen in with the popular language, and to have

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\* It is hardly necessary to observe, that by this "going out" that is not implied, which Arnobius (*Adv. Gent.* i. 45) in the rudest manner expresses, when he speaks of *gens illa mersorum in visceribus dæmonum*. The notion of a ventriloquism such as this, of a spirit having his lodging in the body of a man, could only arise from a gross and entire confusion of the spiritual and material, and has been declared by great teachers of the Church not to be what they understand by this language (see Pet. Lombard, *Sentent.* ii. dist. 8). The German "besessen" involves a *besitzens*, as ἔγκαθέζεσθαι, yet neither this as a mechanical local possession.

spoken of persons under various natural afflictions as “possessed,” supposing He had found such a language current, but now no longer, however once it might have been, vividly linked to the idea of possession by spirits of evil. In this there had been nothing more than in *our* speaking of certain forms of madness as *lunacy*. We do not thus imply *our* belief, however it may have been with others in time past, that the moon has wrought the mischief,\* but finding the word current, we use it: and this the more readily, since its original derivation is so entirely lost sight of in our common conversation, its first impress so completely worn off, that we do not thereby even seem to countenance an error. But suppose with this same disbelief in lunar influences, we were to begin to speak not merely of *lunatics*, but of persons on whom the moon was working, to describe the cure of such, as the moon’s ceasing to afflict them; the physician to promise his patient that the moon should not harm him any more, would not this be quite another matter, a direct countenancing of error and delusion? would there not here be that absence of agreement between thoughts and words, in which the essence of a lie consists? Now Christ does everywhere speak in such a language as this. Take, for instance, his words, Luke xi. 17-26, and assume Him to have known, all the while He was thus speaking, that the whole Jewish belief of demoniac possessions was utterly baseless, that Satan exercised no such power over the bodies or spirits of men, and what should we have here for a King of truth?

And then, besides this, the phenomena themselves are such as no hypothesis of the kind avails to explain, and they thus bid us to seek for some more satisfying solution. For that madness was not the constituent element in the demoniac state is clear, since not only are we without the slightest

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\* There are cases of lunambulism, in which, no doubt, it has influence; but they are few and exceptional (see Schubert, p. 113). I am speaking of using the term to express all forms of mental unsoundness.

ground for supposing that the Jews would have considered all maniacs, epileptic or melancholic persons, to be under the power of evil spirits; but we have distinct evidence that the same malady they did in some cases attribute to an evil spirit, and in others not; thus showing that the malady and possession were not identical in their eyes, and that the assumption of the latter was not a mere popular explanation for the presence of the former. Thus, on two occasions they bring to the Lord one dumb (Matt. ix. 32), or dumb and blind (Matt. xii. 22), and in both instances the dumbness is traced up to an evil spirit. Yet it is plain that they did not consider all dumbness as having this root; for in the history given by St. Mark (vii. 32) of another deaf and dumb, the subject of Christ's healing power, it is the evident intention of the Evangelist to describe one labouring only under a natural defect; with no least desire to trace the source of his malady to any demoniacal influence. There were no doubt signs sufficiently clear distinguishing one case from the other; in that of the demoniac there probably was not the outward hindrance, not the still-fastened string of the tongue; it was not the outward organ, but the inward power of using the organ, which was at fault. This, with an entire apathy, a total disregard of all which was going on about him, may have sufficiently indicated that the source of his malady lay deeper than in any merely natural cause. But, whatever may have been the signs which enabled those about the sufferers to make these distinctions, the fact itself that they did so discriminate between cases of the very same malady, proves decisively that there were not certain diseases which, without more ado, they traced up directly to Satan; but that they did designate by this name of possession, a condition which, while it was very often a condition of disease, was also always a condition of much more than disease.

But what *was* the condition which our Lord and his Apostles signalized by this name? in what did it differ, upon the one side, from madness,—upon the other, from wicked-

ness? It will be impossible to make any advance toward the answer, without saying something, by way of preface, on the scriptural doctrine concerning the kingdom of evil, and its personal head, and the relation in which he stands to the moral evil of our world. Alike excluding, on the one side, the Manichæan error, which would make evil eternal as good, and so itself a god,—and the pantheistic, which would deny any true reality to evil at all, or that it is anything else than good at a lower stage, the unripe, and therefore still bitter, fruit,—the Scripture teaches the absolute subordination of evil to good, and its subsequence of order; in the fact that the evil roots itself in a creature, and in one created originally pure, but the good in the Creator. Yet, at the same time, it teaches that the opposition of this evil to the will of God is most real, is that of a will which does truly set itself against his will; that the world is not as a chess-board on which God is in fact playing both sides of the game, however some of the pieces may be black, and some white; but that the whole end of his government of the world is the subduing of this evil; that is, not abolishing it by main force, which were no true victory, but overcoming it by righteousness and truth. And from this one central will, alienated from the will of God, the Scripture derives all the evil in the universe; all gathers up in a person, in the devil, who has a kingdom, as God has a kingdom—a kingdom with its subordinate ministers,—“the devil and his angels.”\* This world of ours stands not isolated, not rounded and complete in itself, but

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\* The devil is never in Scripture called δάιμων or δαιμόνιον, nor his inferior ministers διαβόλοι. In regard of δαιμόνιον and δάιμων, the first is in the N. T. of far the most frequent occurrence, being used sixty times, while δάιμων occurs but five times. The words are not perhaps perfectly equivalent; but there is more of personality implied in δάιμων than δαιμόνιον. Other names are πνεῦμα πονηρόν, πνεῦμα ἀκαθάρτον, πνεῦμα δαιμονίου ἀκαθάρτου, and at Matt. viii. 16 they are simply τὰ πνεύματα. The word δάιμων (= δαιμών) is either derived from δάω, *sio*, and then signifies “the knowing,” the full of insight (in oldest Greek δάμων), while to know is the special prerogative of spiritual beings (*ὅτι φρόνιμοι καὶ δαήμονες ἦσαν*, Plato, *Crat.*

in living relation with two worlds,—a higher, from which all good in it proceeds,—and a lower, from which all evil. It thus comes to pass that the sin of man is continually traced up to Satan; Peter says to Ananias, “Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost” (Acts v. 3)? and St. John, of Judas Iscariot, “the devil having now put into his heart to betray Him” (John xiii. 2. cf. 1 John iii. 8; John viii. 44); the Scripture not by such language as this denying that the evil of men is truly *their* evil, but affirming with this, that it has its ground in an anterior evil. It is *their* evil, since an act of their will alone gives it leave to enter. To each man the key is committed, with the charge to keep closed the gate of his soul; and it is only through the negligent ward which he has kept that evil has found admission there. At the same time it is the existence of a world of evil beyond and without our world, which links to any remissness here such fatal and disastrous results.

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398 b; ob scientiam nominati, Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, ix. 20); or else from δαιών, in its sense of to divide; the δαιμόνες are then the *distributors*, the dividers and allotters of good and of evil to men, and δαιμὼν would thus be very much the same as Μοῦρα, derived from μέρος, a portion. And this derivation is perhaps preferable, in that ever a feeling of the *fateful* is linked with the word. In classic use the word is of much wider significance than in scriptural, embracing all intermediate beings between men and the very highest divinities, whether the deified men of the golden age, or created and inferior powers; and, as well as δαιμόνιος, is a middle term, capable of being applied to the highest and the lowest, and first deriving from its adjunct a good or an evil significance; thus we have ἀγαθοδαιμών, κακοδαιμών. Yet Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, lix. 19) observes, that in his time even among the heathen the word had come to be used only *in malam partem*, which he attributes to the influence which the Church use of the word only in that sense, had spread even beyond its own limits. Nor is it to be denied that there was a certain tendency to the use of δαιμὼν *in malam partem* which made itself felt at a very early period. The word indeed might be equal Θεός, but it was much oftener a god in his evil workings on men than in his good. This appears more distinctly in δαιμόνιος, which is never one under happy influences of the heavenly powers; but always one befooled, betrayed, impelled or led by them to his ruin. On the Greek idea of the δαιμόνες, see Creuzer's masterly discussion, *Symbolik*, part iii. pp. 719-748, 3d edit., and Solger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, vol. ii. pp. 657-675.

This being so, the question which presents itself is this, namely, what peculiar form of Satanic operation does the Scripture intend, when it speaks of men as possessed, or having devils. Is their evil ethical, or is it merely physical? *Merely* physical it certainly is not. Doubtless the suffering of the demoniac often was great; yet we should err, if we saw in him, as in the victims of ghastly and horrible diseases, *only* another example of the mighty woe which Satan has brought in upon our race. Nor yet, on the other hand, is his evil purely ethical; we have in him something else than merely a signal sinner, a foremost servant of the devil, who with heart and will and waking consciousness is doing his work; for this, whatever his antecedent guilt may have been, and often, I should imagine, it had been great, the demoniac evidently is not. But what in him strikes us the most is the strange confusion of the physical and the spiritual, each intruding into the region of the other. There is a breaking up of all the harmony of the lower, no less than of the higher, life; the same discord and disorganization manifests itself in both. Nor does the demoniac, like the wicked, stand only in near relation to the kingdom of Satan as a whole. It is with him as if out of the malignant spirits of the pit one had singled him out for its immediate prey; as when a lion or a leopard, not hunting in the mass a herd of flying antelopes, has fastened upon and is drinking out the life-blood of one.

But the awful question remains, How should any have sunken into this miserable condition? have been entangled so far into the bands of the devil, or of his ministers? We should find ourselves altogether upon a wrong track, did we conceive of the demoniacs as the worst of men, and their possession as the plague and penalty of a wickedness in which they had greatly exceeded others. Rather we must esteem the demoniac one of the unhappiest, but not, of necessity, one of the guiltiest of our race.\* So far from this, the chief

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\* This is exactly Heinroth's exaggeration, tracing up, as he does,

representatives and organs of Satan, false prophets and anti-christs, are never spoken of in this language.\* We all feel that Judas' possession, when Satan entered into him (John xiii. 27), was specifically different from that of one of the unhappy persons who were the subjects of Christ's healing power. Or, to borrow an illustration from the world of fiction, none would speak of Iago as *δαιμονιζόμενος*, however all the deadliest malignity of hell was concentrated in him; we should trace much closer analogies to this state in some aspects of Hamlet's life. Greek tragedy supplies a yet apter

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insanity in every case to foregoing sin; and not this alone, but affirming that none who had not fallen deeply away from God could be liable to this infliction, that in fact they are those who have fallen from Him the farthest, the outermost circle of them who have obeyed the centrifugal impulses of sin. But every one who knows what manner of persons have been visited by this terrible calamity, and also what manner of persons have *not*, at once revolts against this doctrine thus stated. Still Heinroth's unquestionable merit remains, that more distinctly, I believe, than any other had yet done, he dared to say out that such cases were to be looked at as standing in a different, and *aftentimes* far nearer, connexion to the kingdom of evil than a fever or a broken limb. The mere fact that insanity is more and more allowed on all sides to demand a *moral* treatment, that almost only out of this its removal may be hoped, the physical remedies being merely secondary and subsidiary, should be alone sufficient to put it in wholly another class from every other disease. The attempt to range it with them is merely the attempt, natural enough in those who know not the grace of God in Christ, to avoid looking down into the awful deeps of our fallen nature. For a list of Heinroth's works, almost all bearing upon this subject, see the *Conversations-Lexicon* under his name. In speaking on such a subject he had the inestimable advantage of being at once a theologian and physician. For Schubert's more qualified opinion on the same subject see p. 37 of his work already referred to.

\* So the accusation of the people, "Thou hast a devil" (John vii. 20; viii. 48, 52; x. 20), was quite different from, and betrayed no such deadly malignity as, that of the Pharisees, that He cast out devils by Beelzebul (Matt. xii. 24). That first was a common coarse blasphemy, a stone flung at random; this, which charged Him with being in willing and conscious alliance with the prince of evil, was on the very verge of being the sin against the Holy Ghost (ver. 31). The distinction between wicked men and demoniacs was clearly recognized in the early Church; it had its excommunications for the former, its exorcists for the latter.

example. It is the noble Orestes, whom the “dogs of hell” tortured into madness; the obdurate Clytemnestra is troubled on account of *her* deed with no maddening spectres from the unseen world. Thus, too, in actual life, the horror and deep anguish of a sinner at the contemplation of his sin may have helped on this overthrow of his spiritual life,—anguish which a more hardened sinner would have escaped, but escaped it only by being a worse and more truly devilish man. We are not then, I am persuaded, to see in these cases of possession the deliberate giving in to the Satanic will, of an utterly lost soul, but the still recoverable wreck of that which oftentimes was once a noble spirit.\*

And, consistently with this, we find in the demoniac the sense of a bondage in which he does not acquiesce, of his true life absolutely shattered, of an alien power which has mastered him wholly, and now is cruelly lording over him, and ever drawing further away from Him in whom only any created intelligence can find rest and peace. His state is, in the most literal sense of the word, “a possession;” another is ruling in the high places of his soul, and has cast down the rightful lord from his seat; and he knows this; and out of his consciousness of it there goes forth from him a cry for redemption, so soon as ever a glimpse of hope is afforded, an unlooked-for Redeemer draws near. This sense of misery, this yearning after deliverance, is that, in fact, which constituted these demoniacs subjects for Christ’s healing power. Without

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\* Dallaeus (*De Cult. Rel. Lat.* i. p. 64) draws well the distinction: *Etsi quicunque sub peccati jugo sunt, omnes diaboli servi sint, latum tamen est inter peccatorem et energumenon discrimen. In illum daemon agit efficacia, ut sic dicam, *moralis*, in hunc *physici* sive *naturalis*. Illius animum objectis ad peccandum illecebris pervenit, hujus corpus et corporis sensus vel interiores vel etiam exteriores turbat; illum vitiis, hunc morbis subigit; denique illum volentem et consentientem, hunc invitum et repugnantem tenet ac, ut loquimur, possidet. Alia peccatori, alia energumeno comparata sunt remedia. Illius vitiis imbutus animus ratione, exhortatione, verbo denique evangelico curandus est, hujus corpus vi superiori et dono divinitus dato liberandum.*

it they would have been as little subjects of this as the devils, in whom evil has had its perfect work, in whom there is nothing for the divine grace to take hold of;—so that in their case, as in every other, faith was the condition of healing. There was in them a spark of higher life, not yet trodden out, which, indeed, so long as they were alone, was but light enough to reveal to them their darkness; and which none but the very Lord of life could have fanned again into a flame. But He who came “to destroy the works of the devil,” as He showed Himself lord over purely physical evil, a healer of the diseases of men, and lord no less over purely spiritual evil, a deliverer of men from their sins,—manifested Himself also lord in these complex cases partaking of the nature of either, ruler also in this border land, where these two regions of evil join, and run so strangely and inexplicably one into the other.

Yet while thus “men possessed with devils” is in no wise an equivalent expression for surpassingly wicked men, born of the serpent seed, of the devil’s regeneration, and so become his children (Acts xiii. 10),—seeing that in such there is no cry for redemption, no desire after deliverance, it is more than probable that lavish sin, above all, indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it often would, a weakness of the nervous system, wherein is the especial band between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness. They were greatly guilty, though not the guiltiest of all men. And this they felt, that by their own act they had given themselves over to this tyranny of the devil, a tyranny from which, as far as their horizon reached, they could see no hope of deliverance,—that to themselves they owed that this hellish might was no longer *without* them, which being resisted would flee from them; but a power which now they could not resist, and which would not flee.

The phenomena which the demoniacs of Scripture, especially those now before us, exhibit, entirely justify this view of the real presence of another will upon the will of the

sufferer. They are not merely influences, which little by little have moulded and modified his will and brought it into subjection; but a power is there, which the man at the very moment he is succumbing to it, feels to be the contradiction of his truest being; but which yet has forced itself upon him, and possessed him, that he must needs speak and act as its organ; however presently his personal consciousness may reassert itself for a moment.\* This, that they have not become indissolubly one, that the serpent and the man have not, as in Dante's awful image, grown together, "each melted into other,"† but that they still are twain; this is, indeed, the one circumstance of hope which survives amid the general ruin of the moral and spiritual life. Yet this, for the time being, gives the appearance, though a deceptive one, of a far entirer wreck of his inner life, than manifests itself in wicked men, who have given themselves over wholly, without reserve and without reluctance, to the working of iniquity. In these last,

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\* How remarkable in accesses of *delirium tremens*, the penalty of lavish indulgence in intoxicating drinks, to find something analogous to this double consciousness. A late work, describing the victims of this, expresses itself thus: "In his most tranquil and collected moments he is not to be trusted; for the transition from that state to the greatest violence is instantaneous: he is often recalled by a word to an apparent state of reason, but as quickly his false impressions return; *there is sometimes evidence, at the time, of a state of double consciousness*, a condition of mind which is sometimes remembered by the patient when the paroxysm is over" (Bright and Addison, *On the Practice of Medicine*, vol. i. p. 262). And Größer, a German rationalist, is struck with a like phenomenon in others (*Das Heiligtum und die Wahrheit*, Stuttgart, 1838, p. 302): Auch scheue ich mich trotz allen Aufklärern nicht zu bemerken, das neuerdings hier zu Lande gar seltsame Erscheinungen der Art beobachtet worden sind, und wenn ich recht unterrichtet bin, so hat die höchste ärztliche Behörde in Würtemberg, der solche Fälle vorgelegt wurden, dahin entschieden, dass es allerdings Krankheiten geben könnte, durch welche zwei Bewusstseyn in den Menschen entstehen, so zwar das der Betroffene überzeugt ist, neben seinem Ich noch ein Anderes mit Gewalt eingedrungenes in sich zu haben. In a note he adds, Mein Gewährsmann ist, ausser mehreren Anderen, ein Mann, den ich genau kenne, von kaltem Verstande, unbefangen, wahrhaftig, ein mathematischer Kopf.

† Dante, *Inferno*, xxv.

by the very completeness of their apostasy from the good, there is consistency at any rate; there are no merest incoherencies, no violent contradictions at every instant emerging in their words and in their conduct; they are at one with themselves. But all these incoherencies and self-contradictions we trace in the conduct of the demoniac; he rushes to the feet of Jesus, as coming to Him for aid, and then presently he deprecates his interference. There is not in him one vast contradiction to the true end of his being, consistently worked out, but a thousand lesser contradictions, in the midst of which the true idea of his life, not wholly obscured, will sometimes by fitful glimpses re-appear. There is on his part an occasional reluctance against this usurpation by another of his spirit's throne—a protest, which for the present, indeed, does but aggravate the confusion of his life—which yet contains in it the pledge of a possible freedom, of a redemption whereof he may be a partaker still.

There is one objection to this view of the matter which may still be urged, namely, that if this possession is anything more than insanity in its different forms, how comes it to pass that there are no demoniacs now? how account for the fact that they have wholly disappeared from among us? But the assumption that there are none now, itself demands to be proved. It is not hard to perceive why there should be few by comparison; why this form of spiritual evil should have lost greatly both in frequency and malignity, and from both these causes be far more difficult to recognize. For in the first place, if there was anything that marked the period of the coming of Christ, and that immediately succeeding, it was the wreck and confusion of men's spiritual life which was then, the sense of utter disharmony, the hopelessness, the despair which must have beset every man that thought at all, —this, with the tendency to rush with a frantic eagerness into sensual enjoyments as the refuge from these thoughts of despair. That whole period was “the hour and power of darkness,” of a darkness which then, as just before the dawn

of a new day, was the thickest. The world was again a chaos, and the creative words, "Let there be light," though just about to be spoken, as yet were not uttered. It was exactly the crisis for such soul-maladies as these, in which the spiritual and bodily should be thus strangely intermingled, and it is nothing wonderful that they should have abounded at that time; for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies at certain epochs of the world's history, specially fitted for their generation, with their gradual decline and total disappearance in others less congenial to them, is a fact itself admitting no manner of question.\*

Moreover we cannot doubt that the might of hell has been greatly broken by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh; and with this a restraint set on the grosser manifestations of its power; "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x. 18. cf. Rev. xx. 2). His rage and violence are continually hemmed in and hindered by the preaching of the Word and ministration of the Sacraments. It were another thing even now in a heathen land, above all in one where Satan was not left in undisturbed possession, but wherein the great crisis of the conflict between light and darkness was finding place through the first proclaiming there of the Gospel of Christ. There we might expect to encounter, whether in the same intensity or not, manifestations analogous to these. Rhenius, a well-known Lutheran missionary in India, gives this as exactly his own experience,† —namely, that among the native Christians, even though

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\* It has been remarkably traced by Hecker, in three valuable treatises which have been translated into English under this common title, *On the Epidemics of the Middle Ages*. In treating of the terrible Dancing Mania, he has clearly shown how there are centuries open to peculiar inflictions of these kinds; how they root themselves in a peculiar temperament which belongs to men's minds in those ages; and how when they disappear, or become rare and lose their intensity, their very existence is denied by the sceptical ignorance of a later age (pp. 87-152).

† In a letter of date March 27, 1818, printed in Von Meyer's *Blätter für höhere Wahrheit*, vol. vii. pp. 199-208.

many of them walk not as children of light, yet there is no such falling under Satanic influence in soul and body, as he traced frequently in the heathen around him; and he shows by a remarkable example, and one in which he is himself the witness throughout, how the assault in the name of Jesus on the kingdom of darkness, as it brings out all forms of devilish opposition into fiercest activity, so calls out the endeavour to counterwork the truth through men who have been made direct organs of the devilish will.

It may well be a question moreover, if an Apostle, or one with apostolic discernment of spirits, were to enter into a madhouse now, how many of the sufferers there he might not recognize as "possessed." Certainly in many cases of mania and epilepsy there is a condition very analogous to that of the demoniacs. The fact that the sufferer, and commonly the physician, may apprehend it differently,\* is not of the essence of the matter; they will but in this reflect the popular notion of the time. Thus, no doubt, the Jews multiplied quite unnecessarily the numbers of the possessed, counting as they did, among cases of possession, many lower forms of dis-harmony in the inner life; so too I should believe it was in the early Church, and many then, who had not fallen under this immediate tyranny of the devil, may yet have traced up their sufferings directly to him. Now, however, the popular feeling which the unhappy man brings with him into his for-lorn state sets the opposite way, and in agreement with this is the language which he uses. But the case immediately before us is one in which no question can exist, since the great Physician of souls Himself declares it one of a veritable posse-sion, and treats it as such; and to this we will address our-selves now.

The connexion is very striking in which this miracle stands

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\* I understand that Esquirol, for I have not had the opportunity of myself consulting his works, recognizes demoniacs now. There could not be a higher authority.

with that other which went immediately before. Our Lord has just shown Himself as the pacifier of the tumults and the discords in the outward world ; He has spoken peace to the winds and to the waves, and hushed the war of elements with a word. But there is something wilder and more fearful than the winds and the waves in their fiercest moods—even the spirit of man, when it has broken loose from all restraints, and yielded itself to be his organ, who brings confusion and anarchy wherever his dominion reaches. And Christ will do here a yet mightier work than that which He accomplished there ; He will prove Himself here also the Prince of Peace, the restorer of the lost harmony ; He will speak, and at his potent word this madder strife, this blinder rage which is in the heart of man, will allay itself, and here also there shall be a great calm.

In seeking to combine the accounts given us of this memorable healing, a difficulty meets us at the outset,\* this,

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\* There is another difficulty, namely, that St. Matthew lays the scene of the miracle in the country of the Gergesenes, St. Mark and St. Luke in that of the Gadarenes. But the MSS. in all three Evangelists vary in their readings between Γαδαρηνῶν, Τεραστηνῶν, and Γεργεσοτηνῶν (see Tregelles, *On the Printed Text of the Greek Testament*, p. 192) ; so that it is impossible to say that there exists even a seeming contradiction here. Lachmann, for instance, finds none, who, certainly not with any motive of excluding such, reads Τεραστηνῶν throughout, which was the reading Origen found in most MSS. of his day. Fritzsche, in like manner, reads everywhere Γαδαρηνῶν, which Winer also prefers (*Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Gadara). This reading, Origen says, was not in many MSS. of his time ; yet there seems hardly a doubt that it is the right one ; for Gadara, the capital city of Peraea, lay s.e. of the southern point of Gennesareth, at a distance of not more than 60 stadia from Tiberias, its country being called Γαδαρῖτις. But Gerasa lay on the extreme eastern limit of Peraea (Josephus, *B. J.* iii. 3, 3 ; iv. 9, 1) ; so as sometimes to be numbered among the cities of Arabia, and much too far distant to give its name to any district on the borders of the lake. Origen, therefore, on topographical motives, proposes Τέργεστα : but no evidence seems adducible, beyond his assertion, to prove the existence of any city bearing that name in the neighbourhood of the lake. Josephus never makes mention of it. If there did lie any difference in the original readings, it would probably be explained thus, that the limits of the territory, which might be said to belong to each city, were not very accurately

namely, that St. Matthew speaks of two demoniacs, while St. Mark and St. Luke only of one. Many reconciliations of their statements have been offered; as that one was a more notable person in the country than the other, which is Augustine's;\* or that one was so much fiercer as to cause the other by most persons hardly to be taken note of, which is that of Maldonatus. However we may account for it, one, it is evident, did fall into the background; and, therefore, following the later Evangelists, I shall speak in the main as they do, of the one demoniac who met the Lord as He came out of the ship;—not in the least as though the other was not present: but these accounts, in which there appears but one, being those which, as the fullest, I desire mainly to follow, it would cause much embarrassment to use any other language.

The picture of the miserable man is fearful; and in drawing it each Evangelist has some touches which are peculiarly his own; but St. Mark's is the most graphic of all, adding many strokes which wonderfully aggravate the terribleness of the man's condition, and thus magnify the glory of his cure. The man had his dwelling among the tombs, that is, in places unclean because of the dead men's bones which were there (Num. xix. 11, 16; Matt. xxiii. 27; Luke xi. 44). To those who did not on this account shun them, these tombs of the Jews would afford ample shelter, being either natural caves, or recesses artificially hewn out of the rock, often so large as to be supported with columns, and with cells upon their sides

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determined, so that one Evangelist called it the country of one city, and another of another.

\* Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 24): *Intelligas unum eorum fuisse personæ aliquis clarioris et famosioris, quem regio illa maxime dolerat;* so Theophylact, that one was ἐπισημότερος, and Grotius. See another solution in Lightfoot, *Exercit. on St. Mark*, in loc. It remained for a modern interpreter, Ammon, in his *Biblische Theologie*, to conjecture that the two were the madman and his keeper! In the same way St. Matthew makes mention of two blind men (xx. 30), where the other Evangelists make mention only of one (Mark x. 46; Luke xviii. 35).

for the reception of the dead.\* Being, too, without the cities, and oftentimes in remote and solitary places, they would attract those who sought to avoid all fellowship of their kind.† This man was possessed of that extraordinary muscular strength which maniacs so often put forth (cf. Acts xix. 16), and thus all efforts to bind and restrain him (and such had been often repeated) had proved ineffectual (Mark v. 4). St. Matthew alone relates how he had made the way impassable for travellers; St. Luke alone that he was without clothing,‡ although this is involved in St. Mark's account, who tells us that after he was healed he was found "*clothed, and in his right mind,*" sitting at Jesus' feet. Yet with all this, he was not so utterly lost, but that there woke up in him continually a sense of his misery, and of the terrible bondage under which he had come; although this could express itself only in his cries, and in a blind rage against himself as the

\* Burckhardt and other travellers mention many such tombs on the further side of the lake, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the spot where Gadara stood, as existing to this present day; see, above all, for the whole scenery of this miracle, Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 372.

† Hävernick, on Daniel iv. 33, quotes Aëtius, *De Melancholii*, iii. 8; who says of the melancholy-mad, *οἱ πλεῖον ἐν σκοτείνῳ τόποις χαίρονται διατρίβειν, καὶ ἐν μνήμασι, καὶ ἐν ἐρήμοις*. And Warburton (*The Crescent and the Cross*, vol. ii. p. 352) remarkably illustrates this account: "On descending from these heights [those of Lebanon], I found myself in *a cemetery*, whose sculptured turbans showed me that the neighbouring village was Moslem. The silence of the night was now broken by *fierce yells and howlings*, which I discovered proceeded from a *naked maniac*, who was fighting with some wild dogs for a bone. The moment he perceived me, he left his canine comrades, and bounding along with rapid strides, seized my horse's bridle, and almost forced him backward over the cliff, by the grip he held of the powerful Mameluke bit."

‡ Prichard (*On Insanity*, p. 26) quotes from an Italian physician's description of raving madness or mania: "A striking and characteristic circumstance is the propensity to go quite naked. The patient tears his clothes to tatters;" and presently, in exact accordance with the description we have here: "Notwithstanding his constant exertion of mind and body, the muscular strength of the patient seems daily to increase. He is able to break the strongest bonds, and even chains."

true author of his woe; out of which he wounded and cut himself with stones.\*

From such an one as this did the Lord receive his first greeting on those shores which now, probably for the first time, his feet were treading. This man with his companion starting from the tombs, which were their ordinary dwelling-place, rushed down to encounter, it may have been with hostile violence, the intruders that had dared to set foot on their domain. Or it is possible that they were at once drawn to Christ by the secret instinctive feeling that He was their helper, and driven from HIm by the sense of the awful gulf that divided them from HIm, the Holy One of God. At any rate, if it *was* with purposes of violence, ere the man reached HIm his mind was changed; “*for He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man*” (Luke viii. 29), and the unclean spirit had recognized one that had a right to command, against whom force would avail nothing; and, like others on similar occasions, sought by a strong adjuration to avert his coming doom. He “*cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God that Thou torment me not.*”†

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\* Prichard (*On Insanity*, p. 113), describing a case of raving mania: “He habitually wounded his hands, wrists, and arms, with needles and pins; . . . . the blood sometimes flowed copiously, dropping from his elbows when his arms were bare.” Altogether we have here a fearful commentary on the words of St. Peter, who describes such as this man as being *καταδυραστενομένους ἐπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου* (Acts x. 38). An apocryphal allusion to this miracle adds one circumstance more,—that they gnawed their own flesh: *σαρκοφαγοῦντας τῶν ἴδιων μελῶν* (Thilo, *Cod. Apocryph.* vol. i. p. 808).

† Baur (*Apollonius von Tyana und Christus*, p. 145) observes the remarkable resemblance which the narrative in the *Life of Apollonius* (iv. 25) of the demon which sought vainly to avert its doom, and at length yielded to the threatening words of Apollonius, and abandoned the young man of Coreyra, has with the present. Apollonius exercises there the same tormenting, and by the demon irresistible, might. A resemblance may be traced even in the very words. As the possessed exclaims here, Τί ἔνοι λαὶ σοὶ, Ἰησοῦν, νὺν τοῦ Θεοῦ τον ὑψιστον; δέομαι σον, μὴ με βασανίσης, so there of the Lamia it is said, δακρύοντι ἔψκει τὸ φάσμα, καὶ ἐδεῖτο μὴ βασανίζειν αὐτὸ μηδὲ ἀναγ-

Herein the true devilish spirit speaks out, which counts it a torment not to be suffered to torment others, and an injury done to itself when it is no more permitted to be injurious to others. In St. Matthew they say, “*Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?*” in which last words, “*before the time,*” is the confession upon their part of a time coming, an inevitable hour, when there shall be an entire victory of the kingdom of light over that of darkness, and when all which belong unto the latter shall be shut up in the abyss (Rev. xx. 10), and all power of harming withdrawn from them for ever. All Scripture agrees with this, that the judgment of the angels is yet to come (1 Cor. vi. 3); they are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6); and what the unclean spirits deprecate here, is the bringing in, by anticipation, of that final doom.

It is here noticeable, that the first bidding of Christ is not immediately obeyed;—that the evil spirits remonstrate, and do not at once abandon their prey. No doubt the Lord could have forced them to do so, had He pleased; but the man might have perished in the process (cf. Mark ix. 24). Even that first bidding had brought on a terrible paroxysm. It was then of Christ’s own will, of the Physician wise and tender as He was strong, to proceed step by step. And, first, He demands of him his name,—some say, to magnify the greatness of the deliverance and the Deliverer, by showing, through the answer, the power and malignity of the foe that should be overcome. But, more probably, the question was directed *to the man*. It should calm him, by bringing him to recollection, to the consciousness of his personality, of which

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*κάζειν δύολογεῖν, ὅτι εἴη.* Baur does not doubt that that narrative was fashioned in imitation of this. Another expulsion of a demon (iv. 20) has even more remarkable points of resemblance; and he might have referred to yet another (iii. 38), in which many features of the father’s intercession for his lunatic son (Matt. xvii. 15, 16), and of the Syrophenician mother for her absent daughter (Matt. xv. 22), appear curiously blended together.

a man's name is the outward expression,—that he was a person, having once been apart from, nor even now inextricably bound up with, those spiritual wickednesses which had dominion over him. The question may thus have been intended to facilitate his cure.\* But if so meant, either the evil spirit snatches at the answer and replies for himself, or the unhappy man, instead of recurring to his true name, that which should remind him of what he was before he fell under this thraldom, declares his sense of the utter ruin of his whole moral and spiritual being. In his reply, "*My name is Legion, for we are many,*" truth and error are fearfully blended. They were "*many;*" not on one side only, but on every side, the walls of his spirit have been broken down; and he laid open to all the incursions of evil, torn asunder in infinite ways, now under one hostile and hated power, now under another. The destruction is complete; they who rule over him are "*lords many.*" Only by an image drawn from the reminiscences of his former life can he express his sense of his own condition. He had seen the serried ranks of a Roman legion, that fearful instrument of conquest, that sign of terror and fear to the conquered nations, and before which the Jew more especially quailed. Even such, at once one and many, cruel and inexorable and strong, were the powers that were tyrannizing over him.† When it is said of Mary Magdalene, that out of her had gone *seven* devils (Luke viii. 2), something of the same truth is expressed,—that her spiritual life was laid waste, not on one side only, but on many (cf. Matt. xii. 45).

And then again, with that interchange of persons which was continually going forward, that quick shifting, so to speak, of the polarity, so that at one moment the human con-

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\* In cases of somnambulism, which must be regarded as a disorder, though in one of the mildest forms, of the spiritual life, the sleep-walker, when every thing else fails, may often be awakened and recalled to a healthy state of consciousness through being addressed by his name (Schubert, *Krankheiten und Störungen der menschl. Seele*, p. 368).

† See Olshausen, *Commentary*, in loc.

sciousness became the positive, at another the negative pole, the unclean spirit, or rather the man, become now his organ, speaks out anew, entreating not to be sent into the abyss\* (Luke viii. 31), or, clothing his petition in the form of a notion which belonged to the man whom he possessed, “*that He would not send them away out of the country*” (Mark v. 10). The request is in each case the same, for, according to Jewish notions, certain countries being assigned to evil as well as to good spirits, the limits of which they were unable to overpass, to be sent out of their own country, no other being open to them, implied being sent into the abyss, since that alone would remain for them. This request is in fact a repetition of their prayer that they should ‘not be tormented before the time.

Hereupon follows a circumstance which has ever proved a chief stumbling-block offered by the Evangelical history. The devils, if they must leave their more welcome habitation, the heart of man, if indeed the Stronger is come, spoiling the strong man’s goods, taking his thralls out of his power, yet entreat, in their inextinguishable desire of harming, or, out of those mysterious affinities which evermore reveal themselves between the demoniacal and the bestial,† to be allowed to

\* Εἰς τὴν ἀβύσσον,—unhappily translated in our Version, “*into the deep*,” so leaving room for a confusion with what follows, where the swine under their influence rush down “*into the sea*.” Wiclif’s was better, “Thei preieden hym that he schulde not comande hem, that they schulden go *in to hell*.” With a like liability to confusion, ἀβύσσος is translated “*the deep*,” Rom. x. 7, where also “*hell*,” meaning by that word Hades in its most comprehensive sense, as including the gathering-place of the departed, no less than the φυλακή, the abode of evil spirits, would have been better. Besides these two places, the word only occurs in the Apocalypse, but there several times, as ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 8; xx. 1, 3, where it plainly means only the last, the τάρταρος (2 Pet. ii. 4) = γέεννα. The word is properly an adjective from βυσσός, Ionic for βυθός: so Euripides (*Phænissæ*, v. 1632), ταρτάρου ἀβύσσος χάσματα.

† Of which last the swine may be taken for the fittest exponents, as is witnessed in the ethical language of most nations; in the Latin, for example, where *spurcus* is in close connexion with *porcus* (Döderlein, *Lat. Synon.* vol. ii. p. 55), and in the French, *cochonnerie*.

enter into the swine;—of which a large herd,—St. Mark with his usual punctuality notes that they were “*about two thousand*,”—were feeding on the neighbouring cliffs. But to the evil all things turn to evil. God’s saints and servants appear *not* to be heard; and the very refusal of their requests is to them a blessing (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9). The wicked, Satan (Job i. 11) and his ministers and servants, are sometimes heard, and the very granting of their petitions issues in their worse confusion and loss.\* So is it now: these evil spirits had their prayer heard; but only to their ruin. They are allowed to enter into the swine; but the destruction of the whole herd follows; and that which they most dreaded came upon them; no longer finding organs in or through which to work, they are driven perforce to that very prisonhouse which they most would have shunned.

The first cavil which has been raised here is this—What right had the Lord to inflict this loss on the owners of the swine?—being the same which has been raised on occasion of the cursing of the barren fig-tree (Matt. xxi. 19). It might be sufficient to answer to this, that Christ did not send the devils into the swine; He merely drove them out from the men; all beyond this was merely permissive.† But supposing that He had done so—a man is of more value than many swine; and if this granting of the evil spirits’ request helped in any way the cure of this sufferer, caused them to relax their hold on him more easily, mitigated the paroxysm of their going forth (cf. Mark ix. 26), this would have been motive enough for allowing them to perish. It may have been necessary for the permanent healing of the man that he should have this outward evidence and testimony that the hellish powers which held him in bondage had quitted their hold. He may have needed to have his deliverance sealed and

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\* See Augustine’s excellent words, in *Ep. Joh. tract. vi. 7, 8.*

† Augustine: *Expulsa et in porcos permissa dæmonia; and Aquinas: Quod autem porci in mare præcipitati sunt, non fuit operatio divini miraculi, sed operatio dæmonum e permissione divinâ.*

realized to him in the open destruction of his enemies; not otherwise to be persuaded that Christ had indeed and for ever set him free; as Israel, coming out of Egypt, must *see* the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore before they could indeed believe that the rod of their oppressors had been broken for ever (Exod. xiv. 30).

But setting aside all apologies, on what ground, it may be asked, is this which the Lord here wrought, made more the subject of cavil than any other loss inflicted upon men by Him from whom all things come, and who therefore can give or take away according to the good pleasure of his will? Men might object with as good a right against the murrain which causes cattle to die, the inundation that destroys the fruits of the field, or any other natural calamity with which God chastens his children, punishes, or seeks to make contrite the hearts of his enemies. For oftentimes his taking away is in a higher sense a giving; a withdrawing of the meaner thing, to make receptive of the better. Thus might it well have been intended here, however the sin of these Gadarenes hindered the gracious design. If these swine belonged to Jewish owners, and we know from Josephus that there were numbers of hellenizing Jews just in these parts, there may have been in this loss a punishment meant for them who from motives of gain showed themselves despisers of Moses' law. It must be owned, however, that the population of the Decapolis was predominantly Gentile; Josephus calls Gadara itself a Greek city.\*

But the narrative is charged with contradiction and absurdity. The unclean spirits ask permission to enter into the swine, yet no sooner have they thus done than they defeat their own purpose, destroying that animal life, from which if they be altogether driven, they have already confessed they will be obliged to betake them to the more detested place of their punishment. It is nowhere, however, said that they

\* *Antt. xvii. 11, 4.*

drove the swine down the steep place into the sea. It is just as easy, and much more natural, to suppose that against *their* will the swine, when they found themselves seized by this new and strange power, rushed themselves in wild and panic fear to their destruction,—the foremost plunging headlong down the cliffs, and the rest blindly following. But in either case, whether they thus destroyed themselves, or were impelled by the foul spirits, there reveals itself here the very essence and truest character of evil, which evermore outwits and defeats itself, being as inevitably scourged in the granting of its requests as in their refusal; which, stupid, blind, self-contradicting, and suicidal, can only destroy, and will involve itself in the common ruin rather than not destroy. And what, if in the fierce hatred of these foul spirits of darkness against the Prince of light and life, they may have been willing to bring any harm on themselves, if only they might so bring on Him the ill-will of men, and thus traverse and hinder his blessed work? And this, no doubt, they did effectually here; for it was fear of further losses, and alienation from Christ on account of those by his presence already entailed upon them, which was the motive for their urging Him to leave their country.

But the point of most real difficulty is the *entering* of the devils into the swine,—the working, that is, of the spiritual life on the bestial, which seems altogether irreceptive of it, and to possess no organs through which it could operate. I put aside of course here, as both in themselves merely ridiculous, and irreconcilable with the documents as they lie before us, the solutions of Paulus and his compeers, that the demoniac, in the parting paroxysm of his madness, hunted the creatures over the precipices into the lake, or that, while the swineherds were drawn by curiosity to watch the encounter between Christ and the demoniac, or had gone to warn Him of the danger of meeting the madman, the un-tended herd fell a fighting, and so tumbled headlong over the cliffs. Whatever difficulties this miracle may present, it

certainly is not by shifts such as these to be evaded; and their perplexity at any rate claims to be respectfully treated, who find it hard to reconcile this fact with what else they have been taught to hold fast as most precious concerning the specific difference between man with the whole order of spiritual existences on the one side, and the animal creation on the other. I will only suggest that perhaps we make to ourselves a difficulty here, too easily assuming that the lower animal world is wholly shut up in itself, and incapable of receiving impressions from that which is above it. The assumption is one unwarranted by deeper investigations, which lead rather to an opposite conclusion,—not to a breaking down of the boundaries between the two worlds, but to the showing in what wonderful ways the lower is subject to the impressions of the higher, both for good and for evil.\* Nor does this working of the spiritual on the physical life stand isolated in this single passage of Scripture, but we are throughout taught the same lesson (Gen. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 18).

*"And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into*

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\* Kieser, who certainly would not go out of his way to bring his theory into harmony with Scripture facts, distinctly recognizes (*Tellurismus*, vol. ii. p. 72), with reference to this present miracle, the possibility of the passing over of demoniac conditions upon others, and even upon animals (die Möglichkeit eines Uebergangs dämonischer Zustände auf Andere, und selbst auf Thiere). How remarkable in this respect are well-authenticated cases of *clairvoyance*, in which the horse is evidently by its terror, extreme agitation, and utter refusal to advance, a partaker of the vision of its rider (see Passavant, *Unters. über d. Hellschen*, p. 316). And indeed in our common life the horse, and the dog no less, are eminently receptive of the spiritual conditions of their appointed lord and master, Man. With what electric swiftness does the courage or fear of the rider pass into the horse; and so too the gladness or depression of its master is almost instantaneously reflected and reproduced in his faithful dog. It is true that we might expect, as we should find, far less of this in the grosser nature of the swine than in those creatures of nobler races. Yet the very fierceness and grossness of these animals may have been exactly that which best fitted them for receiving such impulses from the lower world as those under which they perished.

*the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils."* All three Evangelists record the entreaty of the Gadarenes, so unlike that of the Samaritans (John iv. 40), which followed : "*And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus ; and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts,*"—an entreaty which surely had not, as Jerome and others suggest, its root in their humility, was in no respect a parallel to St. Peter's, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (Luke v. 8) ; but, as already observed, was provoked by the injury which already from his brief presence among them had ensued to their worldly possessions, as perhaps by the fear of greater losses which might follow. This was their trial. It should now be seen whether the kingdom of heaven was first in their esteem ; whether they would hold all else as cheap by comparison ; so that in this aspect the destruction of the swine had in regard of them an ethical purpose and aim. But under this trial they failed ; it was nothing to them that a man, probably a fellow-citizen, was delivered from that terrible bondage, that they saw him "*sitting at the feet of Jesus,*" or being taught of Him, as this language implies (Luke x. 39; Acts xxii. 3), "*clothed, and in his right mind.*"\* The breach in their worldly estate alone occupied their thoughts. For spiritual blessings brought near to them they cared nothing at all ; and "*they were afraid,*" being ignorant what next might follow. They felt the presence of God's Holy One intolerable to them, so long as they remained in their sins ; and that to them, so remaining, it could only bring mischiefs, of which they had had the first experience already. And having no desire to be delivered from their sins, they entreated Him to

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\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. qu. 13) : Significat multitudinem vetustam suam vitam delectatam, honorare quidem, sed nolle pati, Christianam legem, dum dicunt quod eam implere non possint, admirantes tamen fidem populum a pristinâ perditâ conversatione sanatum. The name *Gergeseni* has been often since given to those who will not endure sound doctrine (Erasmus, *Adagia*, p. 313).

go; "for," as St. Luke tells us, "*they were taken with great fear.*" And *their* prayer also was heard (Ps. lxxviii. 29-31); He did depart; He took them at their word, and, as they desired, He let them alone\* (cf. Exod. x. 28, 29).

But the healed man, as St. Mark and St. Luke inform us, would fain have accompanied his Healer: and "*when He was come into the ship, prayed Him that he might be with Him.*" Was it that he feared, as Theophylact supposes, lest in the absence of his Deliverer the spirits of the pit should resume their dominion over him, and nowhere felt safe but in immediate nearness to Him?—or did he only desire, out of the depth of his gratitude, henceforth to be a follower of Him to whom he owed this mighty deliverance? Whatever was his motive, the Lord had other purposes with him. He was Himself leaving *them* who had shown themselves so unworthy of his presence; but He would not leave Himself without a witness among them. This healed man should be to them a standing monument of his grace and power, an evidence that He would have healed them, and was willing to heal them still, of all the diseases of their souls: "*Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*"† And the man did so, and not with-

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\* Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. exxxvi. 3*) has a noble passage on what the world calls prosperity; which when Christ interrupts, then the world counts that He has brought nothing good, and would fain have Him depart from it, if it might: *Vides enim si theatra et amphitheatra et circi starent incolumes, si nihil eaderet de Babyloniam, si ubertas esset circumfluentium voluptatum hominibus cantaturis et saltaturis ad turpia cantica, si libido scortantium et meretricantium haberet quietem et securitatem, si non timeret famem in domo suâ qui clamat ut pantomimi vestiantur, si haec omnia sine labe, sine perturbatione aliquâ fluenter, et esset securitas magna nugarum, felicia essent tempora, et magnum felicitatem rebus humanis Christus adulisset. Quia vero cæduntur iniquitates, ut extirpatâ cupiditate plantetur caritas Jerusalem, quia miscentur amaritudines vitæ temporali, ut æterna desideretur, quia erudiantur in flagellis homines, paternam accipientes disciplinam, ne judiciariam inveniant sententiam; nihil boni adulit Christus, et labores adulit Christus.*

† Erasmus rightly connects ὅσα not alone with πεποίηκεν, but also

out effect : “*He departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him ; and all men did marvel.*”\*

Yet this command that he should go and declare the great things done for him, may have found its further motive in the peculiar moral condition of the man. Only by a reference to this moral condition are we able to reconcile the apparently contradictory injunctions which the Lord laid on those whom He had healed :—some being forbidden to say anything of God’s goodness to them (Matt. viii. 4 ; Luke viii. 56),—this one commanded to publish everywhere the mercy which he had received. Where there was danger of all deeper impressions being scattered and lost through a garrulous repetition of the outward circumstances of the healing, silence was enjoined, that so there might be an inward brooding over the gracious and wondrous dealings of the Lord. But where, on the contrary, there was a temperament over-inclined to melancholy, sunken and shut up in itself, and needing to be drawn out from self, and into healthy communion with its fellow-men,—as was evidently the case with such a solitary melancholic person as we have here,—there the command was, that the man should go and tell to others the great things which God had done for him, and in this telling preserve the healthy condition of his own soul.

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with ἡλέγσεν—of course, in the second case, adverbially : Et *quæcumque* misertus sit tui. It is true that we should rather expect in such a case to have the δοῦτα repeated; but there are abundant examples to justify the omission.

\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 13) : Ut si quisque intelligat post remissionem peccatorum redeundum sibi esse in conscientiam bonam, et serviendum Evangelio propter aliorum etiam salutem, ut deinde eum Christo requiescat; ne cum præpropere jam vult esse cum Christo, negligat ministerium prædicationis, fraternæ redemptioni accommodatum. He makes in the same place this whole account an historicoprophetic delineation of the exorcising, so to speak, of the heathen world of its foul superstitions and devilish idolatries.

## 6. THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER.

MATT. ix. 18, 19, 23-26; MARK v. 22, 24, 35-43; LUKE viii. 41, 42, 49-56.

THE present miracle is connected by St. Mark and St. Luke immediately with our Lord's return from that eastern side of the lake, which He had left at the urgent entreaty of its inhabitants. In St. Matthew other events, the curing of the paralytic, his own calling, and some discourses with the Pharisees, are inserted between. Yet of these only the latter (ix. 10-17) the best harmonists find really to have here their proper place. The two later Evangelists tell us also the name of the father of the child; St. Matthew, who has his eye only on the main fact, and passes over every thing that is not absolutely necessary for that, speaks of him more generally as "*a certain ruler*;" they again designating what kind of a ruler, namely that he was one of the prefects of the synagogue.\* This, we can hardly doubt, was the synagogue of Capernaum, where now Jesus was (Matt. ix. 1); the man therefore most probably made afterwards a part of that deputation which came to the Lord pleading for the heathen centurion (Luke vii. 3); "the elders of the Jews" there being identical with the "*rulers of the synagogue*" here.

He who on that later occasion may have appeared pleading for another, presents himself now before the Lord, touched by a yet nearer calamity; for he comes saying,

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\* In Matthew simply ἀρχων, which is explained in Mark εἰς τὸν ἀρχισυναγώγων, in Luke ἀρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς. Many synagogues had but one of these (Luke xiii. 14), the name itself indicating as much; yet it is plain from this and other passages, as Acts xiii. 15, that a synagogue often had many of these "*rulers*." Probably those described as τοὺς ὄντας τῷν Ιουδαίων πρώτους, whom St. Paul summoned at Rome (Acts xxviii. 17), were such chiefs of the synagogue (see Vitringa, *De Synagoga*, pp. 584, sqq.).

*“My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.”* Thus St. Matthew records his words, but the others with an important variation: *“My little daughter lieth at the point of death”*\* (Mark v. 23): *“He had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying”* (Luke viii. 42). Thus they make him speak of her as dying when he came, which the latter facts of the history show to have been the more exact, St. Matthew as already dead. Yet these differences are not hard to adjust; he left her at the last gasp; he knew not whether to regard her as alive or dead; he only knew that life was ebbing so fast when he quitted her side, that she could scarcely be living now;† and yet, having no certain notices of her death, he was perplexed whether to speak of her as departed or not, and thus at one moment expressed himself in one language, at the next in another. It is singular enough that a circumstance like this, so taken from the life, so testifying of the reality of the things recorded, should have been advanced by some as a contradiction between one Gospel and another.

That Lord, upon whose ear the tidings of woe might never fall in vain, at once *“arose and followed him, and so did his disciples.”* The crowd who had been listening to his teaching, followed also, curious and eager to see the end. The miracle of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood found place upon the way, but it will naturally be better treated apart; being, as it is, entirely separable from

\* Εσχάτως ἔχειν = in extremis esse; one of the frequent Latinisms of St. Mark. So *ἰκανὸν ποιῆσαι* = satisfacere (xv. 15), *σπεκουλάτωρ* (vi. 27), *φραγελλώω* (xv. 15), *λεγέων* (v. 9, 15), *πραιτώρων* (xv. 16), *κῆνσος* (xii. 14), *κεντυρίων* (xv. 39), *κοδράντης* (xii. 42), and others. The use of diminutives, such as the *θυγάτριον* here, is also characteristic of this Evangelist; thus *κοράσιον* (v. 41), *κυνάρια* (vii. 27), *ἰχθύδια* (iii. 7), *ἀτάριον* (xiv. 47).

† Bengel: Ita dixit ex conjecturâ. Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 28): Ita enim desperaverat, ut potius eam vellet reviviscere, non credens vivam posse inveniri, quam morientem reliquerat. But Theophylact, not, I think, rightly: *Ἡν αὐξάνων τὴν συμφορὰν, ὡς εἰς ἔλεον ἀλκύσας τὸν Χριστᾶν*.

this history, though not altogether without its bearing upon it; for the delay, the words which passed between the Lord and his disciples, and then between Him and the woman, must all have been a sore trial to the agonized father, now when every moment was precious, when death was shaking the last few sands in the hour-glass of his daughter's life,—a trial in its kind similar to that with which the sisters of Lazarus were tried, when they beheld their beloved brother drawing ever nigher to death, and the Lord tarried notwithstanding. But sore as the trial must have been, we detect no signs of impatience on his part, and this no doubt was laid to his account. While the Lord was yet speaking to the woman, "*there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest\* thou the Master any further?*" St. Luke mentions but one, probably that one who was especially charged with the message, whom others went along with, as it is common for men in their thirst for excitement to have a kind of pleasure in being the bearers even of evil tidings. Their hope had now perished. They who, perhaps, had faith enough to believe that Christ could fan the last expiring spark of life into a flame, yet had not the stronger faith to anticipate the harder thing, that He could rekindle that spark of life, after it had been quenched altogether. Perhaps the father's hope would have perished too; and thus no room would have been left for this miracle, when faith, the necessary condition, was wanting; if a gracious Lord had not seen the danger, and prevented his rising unbelief. "*As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He saith to the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid,*

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\* Σκύλλω, properly to flay, as σκῦλα are originally the spoils, dress, or armour, stripped from the bodies of the slain; see Passow. Afterwards more generally, fatigare, vexare, and often with a more particular allusion to fatiguing with the length of a journey (we should read ἐσκυλμένοι, not ἐκλελυμένοι, Matt. xix. 36); and no doubt it has this meaning here: "Why dost thou weary the Master with this tedious way?" (see Suicer, *Thes.* s. v.)

*only believe.*" There is something very gracious in that "*as soon.*" The Lord spake upon the instant, leaving no room for a thought of disbelief to insinuate itself into the father's mind, much less to utter itself from his lips, but preoccupying him at once with words of encouragement and hope.\*

And now He takes with Him three of his Apostles, three only, the same three who were allowed, on more than one later occasion, to be witnesses of things concealed from the others. This, however, is the first time that we read of any such election within the election,† and the fact of such now finding place would mark, especially when we remember the solemn significance of the other seasons of a like selection (Matt. xvii. 1, 2; xxvi. 37), that this was a new era in the life of the Lord. That which He was about to do was so great and holy that those three only, the flower and the crown of the apostolic band, were its fitting witnesses. The parents were present on grounds altogether different. With those, and these, and none other, "*He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult and them that wept and wailed greatly.*" There, as every where else, He appears calming and pacifying: "*He saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.*"

Some, and those not unbelievers, nor yet timid half believers, who have learned to regard miracles as so much perilous ware, from which it is always an advantage when the Gospels can be a little lightened,—Olshausen, for instance,‡ who manifests no wish to explain away the wonder-

\* Titus Bostrensis (in Cramer, *Cat. in Luc.*): "Ινα γὰρ μὴ εἴπῃ καὶ αὐτὸς, Ἐπίσχεις, οὐ χρέαν σου ἔχω, Κύριε, ηδη γέγονε τὸ πέρας, ἀπέθανεν, ἦν προσεδοκῶμεν ὑγιαίνειν ἀπιστος γὰρ ἦν, Ιουδαϊκὸν ἔχων φρόνημα, φθάνει ὁ Κύριος καὶ φησι, Μὴ φοβοῦ, παῦσον τῆς ἀπιστίας τὰ ρήματα.

† The three, Peter, James, and John, are called therefore by Clement of Alexandria, ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι.

‡ Origen (*Con. Cels.* ii. 48) has, I think, the same view of this miracle. He is observing on the absence of all *prodigality* in the miracles, and notes that we have but three raisings from the dead in

ful works of our Lord,—have yet considered his words, repeated by all narrators of this miracle, “*The maid is not dead, but sleepeth,*” to be so explicit and distinct a declaration that death had not absolutely taken place, that in obedience, as they believe, to the Lord’s own words, they refuse to number this among the actual raisings from the dead. They will count it only a raising from a death-like swoon; though one, it may have been, from which the maiden would never have been recalled but for that life-giving touch and voice. Had this, however, been the case, Christ’s word to the father would clearly have been different, when the tidings came that the spirit of the child was actually fled. The consolation must have clothed itself in another language. He might have brought out his own omniscience, and bidden the father to dismiss his fear, for *He* knew that there was yet life in the child. But that “*Be not afraid, only believe,*” points another way; it is an evident summoning him to a trust in the all-might of Him, to whose help he had appealed. And as regards the Lord’s declaration, that the maiden was not dead, but slept, He uses exactly the same language concerning Lazarus, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth” (John xi. 11); and when to this obvious objection Olshausen replies, that Christ explains there distinctly that He meant the sleep of death, adding presently, “Lazarus is dead,” it is enough to answer that He only does so after his disciples have plainly misunderstood his words: He would have left those words as He had spoken them, but for their error in supposing that He had spoken of natural sleep; it was only then that “Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.” But as Lazarus did but sleep, because Jesus was about to “awake him out of sleep,” so was this maiden only sleeping, because her

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all: mentioning this first of Jairus’ daughter, he adds, περὶ Ἰησοῦ οὐδὲ ὅπως εἶπεν, Οὐκ ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ καθεύδει· λέγων τι περὶ αὐτῆς ὃ οὐ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀποθανοῦσι προσῆγεν, but he does not express himself very plainly.

awakening in like manner was so near.\* Beside this, to speak of death as a sleep, is an image common to all languages and nations. Thereby the reality of the death is not denied, but only the fact implicitly assumed, that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep is by an awakening. Nor is it hard to perceive why the Lord should have used this language here. First, for the father's sake. The words are for the establishing of his trembling faith, which at the spectacle of all these signs of mourning, of these evidences that all was finished, might easily have given way altogether; they are a saying over again, "*Be not afraid, only believe.*" He, the Lord of life, takes away that word of fear, "*She is dead,*" and substitutes that milder word which contains the pledge of an awakening, "*She sleepeth.*" And then in regard of the multitude, according to that holy humility which makes Him ever withdraw his miracles as much as possible from observation, He will by this word of a double signification cast a veil over that which He is about to accomplish.

And now, having thus spoken, He expelled from the house the crowd of turbulent mourners; and this for two reasons. Their presence, in the first place, was inappropriate and superfluous there; they were mourners for the dead, and she was not dead; or, at all events, death in her was so soon to give place to returning life, that it did not deserve the name; it was but as a sleep and an awakening. Here was reason enough. But more than this, the boisterous and tumultuous grief of some, with the hired lamentations of others,† gave no promise of the tone and temper of spirit, which became the witnesses of so holy and awful a mystery, a mystery from which even Apostles themselves were ex-

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\* Fritzsche: *Puellam ne pro mortuâ habetote, sed dormire existimatote, quippe in vitam mox reddituram.*

† The presence of the hired mourners at a funeral, in general women (*θρηνωδοί*, præficae, cornicines, tubicines), was a Greek and Roman, as well as a Jewish, custom (see Becker, *Charikles*, vol. ii. p. 180).

cluded—to say nothing of the profane and scornful spirit with which they had received the Lord's assurance, that the child should presently revive—“*they laughed Him to scorn.*” Such scorers shall not witness the holy act: the pearls should not be cast before them. Compare 2 Kin. iv. 33.

The house was now solitary and still. Two souls, believing and hoping, stand like funeral tapers beside the couch of the dead maiden—the father and the mother. The Church is represented in the three chief of its Apostles. And now the solemn awakening finds place, and this without an effort on his part, who is absolute Lord of quick and dead. “*He took the damsel*”—she was no more than a child, being “*of the age of twelve years*” (Mark v. 42)—“*by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.*” St. Mark preserves for us, probably from the lips of Peter, the very words which the Lord spake in the very language wherein He uttered them, “*Talitha Cumi,*” as he does the “*Ephphatha*” on another occasion (vii. 34\*). And at that word, and at the touch of that hand, “*her spirit came again,† and she arose straightway* (Luke viii. 55), *and walked*” (Mark v. 42). Hereupon, at once to strengthen that life which was come back to her, and to prove that she was indeed no ghost, but had returned to the realities of a mortal existence (Luke xxiv. 41; John xxi. 5; Acts x. 41), “*He commanded to give her meat;*” a

\* The mention of these words may be taken as an evidence that in the intercourse of ordinary life our Lord served Himself, as was natural, of the popular Aramaic. This does not, of course, decide anything concerning the language which He used, addressing mixed assemblages of Jews and heathen, learned and unlearned. On the extent to which Greek had at this time found its way into Palestine, and was familiar to all classes there, there is a masterly discussion in Hug's *Introduction to the New Testament*, which must be considered to have put the matter quite in a new light, and to have added greatly to the probabilities that He often in his discourses employed that language. His conversation with Pilate could scarcely have been carried on in any other.

† The words of St. Luke, καὶ ἐπέστρεψε τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς, are exactly the same as those 1 Kin. xvii. 22, LXX.

## 7. THE HEALING OF A WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD.

MATT. ix. 20-22; MARK v. 25-34; LUKE viii. 43-48.

**I**N all three accounts which we have of this miracle, it is mixed up with that of the raising of Jairus' daughter, and cuts that narrative in two. Such overflowing grace is in Him, the Prince of life, that as He is hastening to accomplish one work of power, He accomplishes another, as by the way. "His *obiter*," in Fuller's words, "is more to the purpose than our *iter*;" his *πάρεπυον*, one might add, than our *ἔπυον*. To the second and third Evangelists we owe the distinctive features of this miracle. St. Matthew relates it so briefly, and passes over circumstances so material, that, had we not the parallel records, we should miss much of the instruction which it contains for us. But it was intended, if not by their human penmen, yet by their divine Author, that the several Gospels should thus mutually complete one another.

The crowd followed and pressed upon the Lord, curious to witness what the issue would be, and whether He could indeed raise the dead child, which, by his consenting to accompany Jairus home, He seemed pledged to do; and yet not all in that crowd out of idle curiosity and eagerness to witness some new thing. Mingled with the unmanered multitude, and to most eyes confounded with it, was "*a certain woman,\* which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had*

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\* A sermon, wrongly attributed to St. Ambrose, makes this woman to have been Martha, the sister of Lazarus. Another legend, that of the gospel of Nicodemus (see Thilo, *Cod. Apocryph.* vol. i. p. 562), makes her to have been Veronica. There is a strange story, full of inexplicable difficulties, told by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* vii. 18), of a statue, or rather two statues, in brass, one of Christ, another of this woman kneeling to Him, which existed in his time at Cæsarea Paneas,

suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that  
 she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."\*  
 St. Mark, whose words I quote, shows himself here, as ever,  
 the most vigorous painter of the outward features of that which  
 he narrates. This woman, afflicted so long, who had suffered  
 much from her disease, perhaps more from her remedies,† all  
 whose means had been wasted in the costly but vain quest  
 of some cure, "when she had heard of Jesus, came in the  
 press behind, and touched his garment; for she said, If I  
 may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole." The faith of  
 this poor sufferer was a most real faith ("Thy faith hath  
 saved thee"), while yet the manner in which Christ's healing  
 power presented itself to her as working, was not without  
 error. It was a material conception which she formed of it.  
 He healed, as she must have supposed, not by the power of  
 his holy will, but rather by a certain magical influence and  
 virtue diffused through his person and round about Him;  
 with which if she could put herself in relation, she would  
 obtain that which she desired.‡ And she may have "touched  
 the hem of his garment," not merely as its extremest part,

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and which, according to the tradition, had been raised by her in  
 thankful commemoration of her healing: see the 10th excursus in  
 the *Annotations* (Oxford, 1812) to Dr. Burton's *Eusebius*. The belief  
 that these statues did refer to this event was so widely spread as to  
 cause Julian, in his hatred against all memorials of Christianity, or  
 according to others, Maximinus, to destroy them. There can be no  
 doubt that a group, capable of being made to signify this event, was  
 there, for Eusebius speaks as having himself seen it; but the cor-  
 rectness of the application is far more questionable. Justin Mart-  
 tyr's mistake of a statue erected at Rome to a Sabine deity (Semoni  
 Saneo) for one erected in honour of Simon Magnus, shows how little  
 critical the early Christians sometimes were in matters of this kind  
 (see Deyling, *Obs. Sac.* vol. i. p. 279).

\* In the apocryphal report of Pilate to Tiberius he forcibly paints the extreme emaciation of this woman from her complaint, ὡς πᾶσαν τὴν τῶν ὀστέων ἀρμοίαν φάινεσθαι, καὶ οὐδεν δίκην διανγάζειν (Thilo, *Cod. Apocryphus*, vol. i. p. 808).

† See Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* (in Marc. v. 26) for an extraordinary list of those in use for this disorder.

‡ There was something in her, as Grotius well remarks, of the notion of the philosophers, Deum agere omnia φύσει, οὐ βουλήσει.

and therefore that which she, timidly drawing near, could most easily reach, but as attributing a peculiar sanctity to it. This hem, or blue fringe on the borders of the garment, was put there by divine command, and was to remind the Jews that they were God's people (Num. xv. 37-40; Deut. xxii. 12). It had thus acquired so peculiar a significance, that those who wished to be esteemed eminently religious were wont to make broad, or to "enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matt. xxiii. 5). But her faith, though thus imperfect in its form, and though it did not, like a triumphant flood-tide, bear her over the peculiar difficulties which beset *her*, a woman, coming to acknowledge a need such as hers, was yet most true in its essence. It found, therefore, what it sought; was the channel to her of the blessing which she desired. No sooner had she touched the hem of his robe than "*she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.*"\*

"*And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?*" The Evangelists employ language which in a measure falls in with the current of the woman's thoughts; yet we cannot for an instant suppose that healing power went forth from the Lord without the full consent of his will,†—that we have here, on his part, an *unconscious* or involuntary healing, any more than on another occasion, when we read that "the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all" (Luke vi. 19). For if power went forth from Him to heal, without reference, on his part, to the spiritual condition of the person that was its subject, the ethical, which is ever the most important part of the miracle, would

\* Ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος, scil. Θεοῦ, since disease must ever be regarded as the *scourge* of God, not always of personal sin, but ever of the sin which the one has in common with all; cf. 2 Macc. ix. 11, θεία μάστιξ, and Ecclus. xl. 9. So Aeschylus (*Sept. adv. Thel.*), πληγεῖς Θεοῦ μάστιγι. The word *plague* (*πληγή* plaga) is itself a witness for this truth.

† Chrysostom: Παρ' ἐκόντος ἔλαβε τὴν σωτηρίαν, καὶ οὐ παρ' ἄκοντος, γέδει γὰρ τὴν ἀψαμένην.

at once disappear. But He who saw Nathanael under the fig-tree (John i. 48), who "needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (John ii. 25), must have known of this woman how sorely in her body she required his help, and how in her spirit she possessed that faith which was the one condition of healing, the one channel of communication between Him and any human need. Nor may the question which the Lord asked, "*Who touched my clothes?*" be urged as implying that He was ignorant who had so done, and only obscurely apprehended that something had taken place. The question, as the sequel of the history abundantly proves, had quite another purpose than this. Had she who came thus behind the Lord been allowed to carry away her blessing in secret, as she proposed, it would not have been at all the blessing to her, and to her whole after spiritual life, which it now was, when she was obliged, by this repeated question of the Lord, to come out of her hiding-place, to avouch at once what she had sought, and what she had found, of help and healing from Him. And when some further argue that He could not have known, seeing it would have been inconsistent with absolute truth for Him to have professed ignorance, and asked the question which He did ask, if all the while He perfectly knew what He thus implicitly averred Himself not to know, there is surely a misapprehension here. A father when he comes among his children, and demands, Who committed this fault? himself conscious, even while he asks, but at the same time willing to bring the culprit to a free confession, and so to put him in a pardonable state, can he be said in any way to violate the laws of the highest truth? The same offence might be found in Elisha's "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" (2 Kin. v. 25), when his heart went with his servant all the way that he had gone; and even in the question of God Himself to Adam, "Where art thou?" (Gen. iii. 9), and to Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" (Gen. iv. 9). In every case there is a moral purpose in the question,—an opportunity given even

at the latest moment for making good at least a part of the error by its unreserved confession, an opportunity which they, whose examples have been here adduced, suffered to escape; but which this woman had grace given her to use.

But this question itself, “*Who touched my clothes?*” or as it is in St. Luke, “*Who touched Me?*” when indeed the whole multitude was rudely pressing upon and crowding round Him, may suggest, and has suggested, many profitable reflections. Out of that thronging multitude one only *touched* with the touch of faith: all the others, though as near or nearer in body, yet lacked that faith which would have been the connecting link between Christ’s power and their need; for there may well have been many sick and suffering among them; and thus they crowded upon Him, but did not touch Him in any way that virtue should go out of Him on them. It is evermore thus in his Church. Many throng Christ; his in name; near to Him and to his sacraments outwardly; yet not *touching* Him, because not drawing near in faith, not looking for, and therefore not obtaining, life and healing from Him, and through these.\*

The disciples, and Peter as their spokesman, wonder at the question, and in answer hardly stop short of finding fault with what is so inexplicable to them: “*Thou seest the multi-*

\* Augustine (*Serm. Ixii. 4*): Quasi enim sic ambularet, ut a nullo prorsus corpore tangeretur, ita dicit, Quis me tetigit? Et illi, Turbae te comprimunt. Et tanquam diceret Dominus, Tangentem quæro, non prementem. Sic etiam nunc est corpus ejus, id est, Ecclesia ejus. Tangit eam fides paucorum, premit turba multorum. . . . Caro enim premit, fides tangit; and again (*Serm. Ixxvii. 4*): Corpus ergo Christi multi moleste premunt, pauci salubriter tangunt. Elsewhere he makes her the symbol of all the faithful (*Serm. ecclv. 3*): Illi prement, ista tetigit; Judæi affligunt, Ecclesia credidit; cf. Gregory the Great, *Moral.* iii. 20; xx. 17. Chrysostom has the same antithesis: Ο πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Σωτῆρα ἀπτεται αὐτοῦ· ὁ δὲ ἀπιστῶν θλίβει αὐτὸν καὶ λυπεῖ. Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.* 67): Ita quoque in Ecclesiâ multi Christo approximant, externis auribus verbum salutis accipiunt, ore suo sacramentum corporis et sanguinis ipsius manducant et bibunt, nullam tamen efficaciam ex eo percipiunt, nec sentiunt fluxum illum peccatorum suorum sisti et exsiccari. Unde illud? Quia destituuntur verâ fide, quæ sola ex hoc fonte haurit gratiam pro gratiâ.

*tude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?"* He, however, re-affirms the fact, "*Somebody hath touched Me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me;*" whereupon the woman, perceiving that concealment was useless, that to repeat the denial which she probably had made with the rest, for "*all denied*" (Luke viii. 45), would profit her nothing; unable, too, to escape his searching glance, for "*He looked round about to see her*" (Mark v. 32), "*came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him,*" and this "*before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.*" Olshausen traces, with much beauty, here the loving and gracious dealings of the Son of Man, who evermore sought to make through the healing of the body a way for the healing of the soul. This woman had borne away a maimed blessing, hardly a blessing at all, had she been suffered to bear it away in secret and unacknowledged. She desired to remain in concealment out of a shame, which, however natural, was untimely now, in this crisis of her spiritual life: and this her loving Saviour would not suffer her to do. By a gracious force He drew her from the concealment she would have chosen; while even here He spared her as far as He could; for not before, but after she is healed, does He require the open confession from her lips. She had found it perhaps altogether too hard, had He demanded it of her before; therefore does He graciously wait till the cure is accomplished, and thus helps her through the narrow way. Altogether spare her this painful passage He could not, for it pertained to her birth into the new life.\*

\* Sedulius, then, has exactly missed the point of the narrative, when of the Lord he says,

. . . . . furtumque fidele  
Laudat, et ingenuæ tribuit sua vota rapinæ;

her fault lying in this, that she sought it as a *furtum*, when she should have claimed it openly: and no less St. Bernard (*De Divers. Serm. xcix.*), when he makes her the figure of all those who would do good hiddenly, avoiding all human applause: *Sunt alii qui nonnulla bona occulte faciunt, . . . . sed tamen furari [regnum cœlorum]*

And now He dismisses her with words of gracious encouragement: “*Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.*”\* Her faith had made her whole, and Christ’s virtue had made her whole.† Not otherwise we say that we are justified by faith, and justified by Christ; faith not being itself the blessing; but the organ by which the blessing is received; the right hand of the soul, which lays hold on Him and on his righteousness. “*Go in peace;*” this is not merely, “*Go with a blessing,*” but, “*Enter into peace, as the future element in which thy life shall move;—and be whole of thy plague.*”

Theophylact traces a mystical meaning in this miracle. The complaint of this woman represents the ever-flowing fountain of sin; the physicians under whom she was nothing bettered, the world’s prophets and sages, who, with all their medicines, their systems and their philosophies, prevailed nothing to stanch that fountain of evil in man’s heart. To touch Christ’s garment is to believe in his Incarnation, wherein He, first touching us, enabled us also to touch Him: and on this that healing, which in all those other things was vainly sought, follows at once. And if we keep in mind how her uncleanness separated her off as one impure, we shall have here an exact picture of the sinner, drawing nigh to the throne of grace, but out of the sense of his impurity not “with boldness,” rather with fear and trembling, hardly knowing what there he shall expect; but who is welcomed there, and, all his carnal doubtings and questionings at once chidden and expelled, dismissed with the word of an abiding peace resting upon him.

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dicuntur, quia laudem humanam vitantes, solo divino testimonio contenti sunt. Horum figuram tenuit mulier in Evangelio, &c. Rather she is the figure of those who would get good hiddenly, and without an open profession of their faith, who believe in their hearts, but shrink from confessing with their lips, that Jesus Christ is Lord, forgetting that this and that alike are required (Rom. x. 9).

\* Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* iv. 20.

† Her faith, ὄργανοκῶς, Christ’s virtue, ἐνεργητικῶς. This, as the causa efficiens; that, as the conditio sine quâ non.

## 8. THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF TWO BLIND IN THE HOUSE.

MATT. ix. 27-31.

WE have here the first of those healings of the blind whereof so many are recorded (Matt. xii. 22; xx. 30; xxi. 14; John ix.) or alluded to (Matt. xi. 5) in the Gospels.\* Nor will this little history be found without one or two distinguishing features of its own. “*And when Jesus departed thence*”—from the house of Jairus, Jerome supposes; but too much stress must not be laid on the connexion in which St. Matthew sets the miracle, nor the conclusion certainly drawn that he intended to place it in such immediate relation of time and place with that other which he had just told—“*two blind men followed Him, crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*” Their faith appears to have been tried, though not so rudely as was that of the Syrophœnician woman at a later day. Not all at once did they obtain their petition; but the Lord seemed at first rather to withdraw Himself from them, suffering them to cry after Him, and for a while paying no regard to their cries. It was only “*when He was come into the house,*” and “*the blind men came to Him*” there, so testifying the earnestness of their desires and the faith of their hearts, that He yielded to them

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\* Their frequent recurrence need not surprise us; for blindness throughout all the East is a far commoner calamity than with us. For this there are many causes. The dust and flying sand, pulverized and reduced to minutest particles, enters the eyes, causing inflammations which, being neglected, end frequently in total loss of sight. The sleeping in the open air, on the roofs of the houses, and the consequent exposure of the eyes to the noxious nightly dews, is another source of this malady. A modern traveller calculates that there are four thousand blind in Cairo alone; and another that you may reckon twenty such in every hundred persons. In Syria, it is true, the proportion of blind is not at all so great, yet there also the calamity is far commoner than in western lands; so that we find humane regulations concerning the blind, as concerning a class, in the Law (Lev. xix. 14; Deut. xxvii. 18).

the blessing which they sought;\* nor even then, until He has first obtained a confession of their faith from their own lips. “*Believe ye that I am able to do this?*” He asks; and only after they, by their “*Yea, Lord,*” have avouched that they had faith to be healed, do they obtain their boon. Then indeed “*He touched their eyes,*” and that simple touch was enough, unsealing as it did for them the closed organs of vision (cf. Matt. xx. 34). At other times He uses as conductors of his power, and helps to the faith of those who should be healed, some further means,—the clay mingled with spittle (John ix. 6, 7), or the moisture of his mouth alone (Mark viii. 23). We nowhere read of his opening the blind eyes simply by his word, although this of course was equally competent to Him. The words which accompany the act of grace, “*According to your faith be it unto you,*” are remarkable for the insight they give us into the relation of man’s faith and God’s gift. The faith, which in itself is nothing, is yet the organ of receiving every thing. It is the conducting link between man’s emptiness and God’s fulness; and herein is all the value which it has. It is the bucket let down into the fountain of God’s grace, without which the man could never draw water of life from the wells of salvation; the purse, which not in itself making its owner rich, effectually enriches him by the treasure which it contains.†

“*And Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread*

\* Calvin : Re igitur et verbis examinare voluit eorum fidem : suspensos enim tenens, imo præteriens quasi non exaudiat, patientiæ ipsorum experimentum capit, et qualem in ipsorum animis radicem egerit fides.

† Faith, the ὅργανον ληπτικόν, nothing in itself, yet every thing because it places us in living connexion with Him in whom every good gift is stored. Thus on this passage Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.* 68) : Fides est instar haustri gratiæ cœlestis et salutis nostræ, quo ex inscrutabili et inexhausto divinæ misericordiæ et bonitatis fonte, ad quem aliter penetrare non possumus, haurimus et ad nos attrahimus quod nobis salutare est. Calvin (*Inst. iii. 11, 7*) : Fides etiamsi nullius per se dignitatis sit, vel pretii, nos justificat, Christum afferendo, sicut olla pecuniis referta hominem locupletat.

*abroad his fame in all that country.*" It is very characteristic, and rests on very deep differences, that of Romish interpreters almost all, indeed I know no exception, should rather applaud these men for not adhering strictly to Christ's command, his earnest, almost threatening,\* injunction of silence,—that the teachers in that Church of will-worship should see in their disobedience the irrepressible overflowings of grateful hearts, which, as such, were to be regarded not as a fault, but a merit. Some, alas! of the ancients, as Theophylact, go so far as to suppose that the men did not disobey at all in proclaiming the miracle; that Christ never intended them to observe his precept about silence, but gave it out of humility, being best pleased when it was not observed.† But among interpreters of the Reformed Church, whose first principle is to take God's Word as absolute rule and law, and to worship God not with self-devised services, but after the pattern that He has shown them, all, so far as I know, stand fast to this, that obedience is better than sacrifice, though the sacrifice be intended for God's special honour (1 Sam. xv. 21). They see, therefore, in this publishing of the miracle, in the face of Christ's prohibition, a blemish in the perfectness of their faith who thus disobeyed; a fault, which was still a fault, even though it might be one into which only grateful hearts could have fallen.

\* Ἐνεβριμήσατο αὐτοῖς. Suidas explains ἐμβριμᾶσθαι=μετὰ ἀπειλῆς ἐντέλλεσθαι, μετ' αὐστηρότητος ἐπιτυμᾶν.

† Thus Aquinas (*Summ. Theol.* 2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>e</sup>, qu. 104, art. 4): Dominus cæcis dixit ut miraculuni occultarent, non quasi intendens eos per virtutem divini precepti obligare; sed sicut Gregorius dicit *19 Moral.*, servis suis se sequentibus exemplum dedit, ut ipsi quidem virtutes suas occultare desiderent, et tamen ut alii eorum exemplo proficiant, prodantur inviti. Cf. Maldonatus, *in loc.*

## 9. THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC.

MATT. ix. 1-8; MARK ii. 1-12; LUKE v. 17-26.\*

THE account of St. Luke would leave us altogether in ignorance where this miracle of healing took place; but from St. Matthew we learn that it was in "*his own city*," and St. Mark tells us that by this we are to understand Capernaum. We have, therefore, here one of the "mighty works," with which the Lord at a later day upbraided that impenitent city (Matt. xi. 23). "*And it came to pass on a certain day as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem.*" It may have been a conference, more or less friendly upon the part of these, which had brought together as listeners and spectators a multitude so great that all avenues of approach to the house were blocked up; "*there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door;*"† and thus for later comers no opportunity, by any ordinary way, of near access to the Lord (cf. Matt. xii. 46, 47). Among these were some "*bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.*" Only St. Mark records for us this last little circumstance, namely, that the bearers were four; only he and St. Luke the novel method to which they had recourse for bringing him before the notice of the great Healer of bodies and of souls: "*When they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was; and when they had broken it up, they*

\* Chrysostom mentions, in a sermon upon this healing (vol. iii. pp. 37, 38, Bened. edit.), that many in his day confounded it with that of the impotent man at Bethesda,—an error so groundless as hardly to be worth the complete refutation which he gives it. In the apocryphal *Evangelium Nicodemi* (see Thilo, *Cod. Apocryph.* vol. i. p. 556) there is a confusion of the two miracles.

† Τὰ πρὸς τὴν θύραν, scil. μέρη = πρόθυρον, vestibulum, atrium.

*let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.*" They first ascended to the roof; for, in Fuller's words, "love will *creep*, but faith will *climb*, where it cannot go;" yet this was not so difficult, because commonly there was a flight of steps on the outside of the house, reaching to the roof; in addition to, or sometimes instead of, an internal communication of the same kind. Such every traveller in those parts of southern Spain which bear a permanent impress of Eastern habits will have seen. Our Lord assumes the existence of these outside stairs when He gives this counsel, "Let him that is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house" (Matt. xxiv. 17), he is to take the nearest and shortest way of escaping into the country: but he could only avoid the necessity of descending through the house by the existence of such steps as these.\* Some will have it that the bearers here, having thus reached the roof, did no more than let down their sick through the grating or trap-door, already existing there (cf. 2 Kin. i. 2), or at most, enlarged such an aperture, till it would allow the passage of their sick man and his bed. Others,† that Jesus was sitting in the open court, round which the houses in the East are commonly built; that to this they got access by the roof, and breaking through the breast-work or battlement (Deut. xxii. 8) made of tiles, which guarded the roof, and removing the linen awning which was stretched over the court, so let down their burden in the midst before the Lord. But all this is without necessity and without

\* The same must have existed in a Roman house, Livy, xxxix. 14. A witness, whom it is important to preserve from being tampered with, is shut up in the chamber adjoining the roof (*cœnaculum super ædes*),—and, to make all sure, *scalis ferentibus in publicum obseratis, aditu in ædes verso* (see Beeker, *Gallus*, vol. i. p. 94).

† Shaw, for instance, quoted in Rosenmüller (*Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. v. p. 129). He makes *τὸ μέσον* to signify the central court, impluvium, cava ædium. And so, too, Titus Bostrensis (in Crainer, *Catena*): Εἴποι δ' ἂν τις ὑπαιθρον εἴναι τόπον, εἰς δὸν διὰ τῶν κεράμων κατεβίβασαν τὴν κλύνην τοῦ παραλύτου, μηδὲν παντελῶς τῆς στέγης ἀνατρέψαντες. But against this use of *εἰς τὸ μέσον*, or rather *for* the common one, see Luke iv. 35; Mark iii. 3; xiv. 60.

warrant. It is impossible to read the words of St. Mark otherwise than as saying that a portion of the actual roof was removed, and so the bed on which the palsied man lay let down before the Lord.\* This will not seem so strange if only we keep in mind that it was in all likelihood an upper chamber (*ὑπερῷον*), where were assembled those that were drawn together to hear the Lord. This, as the most retired (2 Kin. iv. 10, LXX; Acts ix. 37), and probably the largest room in the house, extending oftentimes over its whole area, was much used for such purposes as that which now drew Him and his hearers together† (Acts i. 13; xx. 8).

The merciful Son of man, never taking ill that faith which brings men to Him, but only the unbelief which keeps them from Him, is in nothing offended at this interruption; yea, rather beheld with an eye well pleased this act of theirs: “*Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son,‡ be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven§ thee.*” Had we only the account of St. Matthew, there would be nothing to tell us wherein their special faith consisted, or why their faith, more than that of many others who in like manner brought their sick to Jesus, should have been noted; but the other Evangelists explain what he would have left obscure. From them we have learned that it was a faith which pressed through hindrances, and was not to be turned aside by dif-

\* Winer (*Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Dach*), who weighs the *other* explanations, has come to exactly the same conclusion. Cf. De Wette, *Archäologie*, p. 118, sqq.

† Compare Vitringa, *De Synag.* p. 145, sqq.

‡ In St. Luke, “*Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*” But as He addresses another sorrowful soul, “*Daughter, be of good comfort*” (Matt. ix. 22), probably the tenderer appellation here also found place.

§ Ἀφέωνται (cf. Luke vii. 48; 1 John ii. 12): the old grammarians are not at one in the explanation of this form. Some make it = ἀφῶνται, 2 aor. conj., as in Homer ἀφέγ for ἀφῆ; thus Eustathius. But others more rightly explain it as the præter. indic. pass. = ἀφένται; though of these again some find in it an Attic, others, more correctly, a Doric form: cf. Herod. ii. 165, ἀνένται. This perfect passive will then stand in connexion with the perfect active ἀφέωκα for ἀφέκα (Winer, *Grammatik*, p. 77).

ficulties.\* Many, as Jerome and Ambrose, understand by “*their faith*” the faith of the bearers only; but we must not so limit the words. To them the praise justly was due;† but the sick man must have approved all which they did, or it would not have been done: so that Chrysostom, with greater reason, concludes that it was alike their faith and his, which the Lord saw, approved, and rewarded.

The words with which the Lord welcomes this suppliant furnish a good example of the way in which He gives *before* we ask, and *better* than we ask. This poor man had not as yet asked anything, save, indeed, in the dumb asking of that earnest effort to come near to Him; and all that he dared to seek even in that, certainly all that his friends and bearers sought for him, was that his body might be healed. Yet there was, no doubt, in himself a deep feeling of his sickness in its innermost root, as growing out of sin, perhaps as the penalty of some especial sin whereof he was conscious; and some expression of contrition, some exclamation of a penitent heart, may have been the immediate occasion of these gracious words of forgiveness. From that “*Son, be of good cheer,*” we gather that he was one evidently burdened and cast down, and, as the Lord saw, with a more intolerable weight than that of his bodily sicknesses and pains. In other instances the forgiveness of sins follows the outward healing—for we may certainly presume that such a forgiveness was the portion of the thankful Samaritan (Luke xvii. 19), of the impotent man, first healed, and then warned to sin no more (John v. 14),—but here the remission of sin takes the precedence: nor is it hard to see the reason of this. In

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\* Bengel: *Per omnia fides ad Christum penetrat.* Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.* 43): *Pictura est quomodo in temptationibus et calamitatibus ad Christum nobis conentur intercludere hominum judicia, quales fuerunt amici Jobi, et qui Ps. iii. 3 dicunt: Non est salus ipsi in Deo ejus. Item: Legis judicium et propriæ conscientiæ accusationes. Et quomodo per illa omnia fides perrumpere debeat, ut in conspectum Christi Mediatoris se demittat.*

† *Tuves πιστότατοι*, as in the *Evangelium Nicodemi* they are called.

the sufferer's own conviction there existed so close a connexion between his sin and his plague, that the outer healing would have been scarcely intelligible to him, would have hardly brought home to him the sense of a benefit, unless in his conscience he had been also set free; perhaps he was incapable even of receiving the benefit, till the message of peace had been spoken to his spirit. James v. 14, 15, supplies an interesting parallel, where the same inner connexion is assumed as here between the raising of the sick and the forgiving of his sin. The others, mentioned above, with a slighter sense than this man of the relation between their sin and their suffering, were not first forgiven and then healed; but their thankfulness for their bodily healing was that which first made them receptive of that better blessing, the "grace upon grace" which afterwards they obtained.

The absolving words are not to be regarded as *optative* merely, as a desire that it so might be, but as *declaratory* that so it was; the man's sins *were* forgiven. Nor yet were they declaratory alone of something which past in the mind and intention of God; but, even as the words were spoken, there was shed abroad in the heart of the man the sense of forgiveness and reconciliation with God. For indeed God's justification of a sinner is not merely a word spoken *about* him, but a word spoken *to* him and *in* him; not an act of God's *immanent* in Himself, but *transitive* upon the sinner. In it there is the love of God, and so the consciousness of that love, shed abroad in his heart upon whose behalf the absolving decree has been uttered (Rom. v. 5). The murmurers and cavillers understood rightly what the Lord meant by these words; that He, so speaking, did not merely wish and desire that this man's sins might be forgiven him; that He did not, as the Church does now, in the name of another and wielding a delegated power, but in his own name, forgive him. They also understood rightly concerning the forgiveness of sins itself, that it is a *divine* prerogative; that, as no man can remit a debt save he to whom the debt is due, so

no one can forgive sin save He against whom all sin is committed, that is, God ; and out of this feeling, true in itself, but most false in their present application of it, they said, “*Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?*”

Let us note, as Olshausen here invites us to do, the profound insight into the relations between God and the creature, involved in the scriptural use of the word “blasphemy.” Profane antiquity knew nothing like it. For it “to blaspheme” meant only to speak something evil of a person\* (a use not foreign to Scripture, 1 Cor. iv. 13; Tit. iii. 2; 2 Pet. ii. 2; Jud. 8), and then, to speak something of an evil omen. Only the monotheistic religion included in blasphemy not merely outward words of cursing and outrage against the name of God, but all snatchings on the part of the creature at honours which of right belonged only to the Creator (Matt. xxvi. 65; John x. 36). Had He who in his own name declared, “*Thy sins be forgiven thee,*” been less than the only-begotten Son of the Father, the sharer in all prerogatives of the Godhead, He would indeed have spoken blasphemies, as they deemed. Believing Him only a man, they were right in saying He blasphemed. Their sin was not in this, but in that self-chosen blindness of theirs, which would not allow them to recognize any glory in Him higher than man’s; in that, having arrived at a foregone conclusion as to what kind of Saviour they would have, they wilfully closed their eyes to all in their own Scriptures which set Him forth as other and higher than they had themselves resolved to have Him.†

It is not for nothing that the Lord is said to have “per-

\* Βλασφημεῖν as opposed to εὐφημεῖν.

† Augustine (*Enarr. iii. in Ps. xxxvi. 25*): Quis potest dimittere peccata [inquit] nisi solus Deus? Et quia ille erat Deus, talia cogitantes audiebat. Hoc verum de Deo cogitabant, sed Deum praesentem non videbant. Fecit ergo . . . quod viderent, et dedit quod crederent.

*ceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves."* His soul was human, but his "*spirit*" was divine; and by this divine faculty He perceived the unuttered counsels and meditations of their hearts;\* and perceiving these He laid them bare: "*why reason ye these things in your hearts?*" Thus first He gave them to understand that He was more than they esteemed,† since the thoughts of hearts were open and manifest to Him, while yet God only searches into these (1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; 2 Chron. vi. 30; Jer. xvii. 10); only of the divine Word can it be affirmed that "He is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). "*Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?*" In this question He indicates to them the exact line in which their hard and evil thoughts of Him were at that moment travelling. The charge which they inwardly made against Him, was not merely that He challenged divine attributes, but that, doing so, He at the same time kept Himself safe from detection, challenging those wherein, by the very nature of things, it was not possible to prove the falsehood of his pretensions. Something of this sort they were murmuring within themselves, "*These honours are easily snatched. Any pretender may go about the world, saying to this man and that, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.'*" But where is the evidence that his word is allowed and ratified in heaven, that this which is spoken on earth is sealed in heaven? The very nature of the power which this man asserts for himself secures him from detection; for this releasing of a man from the condemnation of his sin is an act wrought in the inner spiritual world, attested by no outer and visible sign; therefore it is easily claimed, since any disproof of it is impos-

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\* Grotius: Non ut prophetae per afflatum, sed suo spiritu.

† Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.* 43): Jesus igitur exponens Phariseis quid taciti apud se in intimis cordium recessibus cogitabant, ostendit se plus esse quam hominem; et eadem potestate, divinâ scilicet, quâ secreta cordium videat, se etiam peccata remittere posse.

sible." And our Lord's answer, meeting this evil thought in their hearts, is in fact this: " You accuse Me that I am claiming a safe power, since, in the very nature of the benefit bestowed, no sign follows, nothing to testify whether I have challenged it rightfully or not. I will therefore put myself now to a more decisive proof. I will speak a word, I will claim a power, which if I claim falsely, I shall be convinced upon the instant to be an impostor and a deceiver. *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed,\* and go thy way into thine house.†* By the effects, as they follow or do not follow, you may judge whether I have a right to say to him, *Thy sins be forgiven thee.‡*"

\* Κράββατος, or as Tischendorf always spells it, affirming that so in all the best MSS. he finds it, κράβαττος=grubatus (in Luke κλινίδιον), a mean and vile pallet used by the poorest,=σκύμπους, ἀσκάντης. It is a Macedonian word, entirely rejected by Greek purists (see Becker, *Charikles*, vol. ii. p. 121; and Lobeck, *Phrynicus*, p. 62). In relation to this, Sozomen (*Hist. Eccl.* i. 11) tells a curious story of a bishop in Cyprus, who, teaching the people from this Scripture, and having to repeat the Lord's words, substituted σκύμπους for κράββατος, and was rebuked by another bishop present, who asked if the word which Christ used was not good enough for him to use.

† Compare Isaiah's words (xxxv. 3, LXX), when he is recounting the promises of Messiah's time: *'Ισχύσατε, χεῖρες ἀνειμέναι, καὶ γόνατα παραλελυμένα.*

‡ Corn. a Lapide: Qui dicit, Remitto tibi peccata, mendacii argui non potest, sive ea reverâ remittit, sive non, quia nec peccatum nec peccati remissio oculis videri potest; qui autem dicit paralytico, Surge et ambula, se et famam suam evidenti falsitatis periculo exponit; re ipsâ enim si paralyticus non surgat, falsitatis, imposturæ et mendacii ab omnibus arguetur et convincetur. . . Unde signanter Christus non ait, Quid est facilius, remittere peccata, an sanare paralyticum, sed dicere, Dimituntur tibi peccata, an dicere, Surge et ambula? Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): Utrum sint paralytico peccata dimissa, solus neverat, qui dimittebat. Surge autem et ambula, tam ille qui consurgebat, quam hi qui consurgentem videbant approbare poterant. Fit igitur carnale signum, ut probetur spirituale. Bernard (*De Divers. Serm.* xxv.): Blasphemare me blasphematis, et quasi ad excusandum visibilis curationis virtutem, me invisibilem dicitis usurpare. Sed ego vos potius blasphemos esse convinco, signo probans visibili invisibilem potestatem.

In our Lord's argument it must be carefully noted that He does not ask, "Which is easiest, to forgive sins, or to raise a sick man?" for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving was easier than this of healing; but, "Which is easiest, to claim this power or to claim that; *to say*, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or *to say*, Arise and walk?" And He then proceeds: "That is easiest, and I will now prove my right to say it, by saying with effect and with an outward consequence setting its seal to my truth, the harder word, *Rise up and walk*. By doing that which is submitted to the eyes of men, I will attest my right and power to do that which, in its very nature, lies out of the region of proof. By these visible tides of God's grace, I will give you to know in what way the great under-currents of his love are setting, and make clear that those and these are alike obedient to my word. From this which I will now do openly and before you all, you may conclude that it is no 'robbery' (Phil. ii. 6) upon my part to claim also the power of forgiving men their sins."\* Thus, to use a familiar illustration of our Lord's argument, it would be easier for a man, equally ignorant of French and Chinese, to claim to know the last than the first; not that the language itself is easier; but that, in the one case, multitudes could disprove his claim; and, in the other, hardly a scholar or two in the land.

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\* Maldonatus, with his usual straightforward meeting of a difficulty, observes here, Poterit autem aliquis merito dubitare, quomodo Christus quod probandum erat, concludat. Nam si remittere peccata erat re verâ difficilius, dum experientiâ curati paralyticî docet se quod re ipsâ facilius est, posse facere: non bene probat posse et se peccata remittere, quod erat difficilius. Respondeo, Christum tantum probare voluisse sibi esse credendum, quod bene probat ab eo, cuius probatio erat difficilior; quasi dicat, Si non fallo cum dico paralyticô, Surge et ambula, ubi difficilius est probare me verum dicere, eur creditis me fallere cum dico, Remittantur tibi peccata tua? Denique ex re, quæ effectu probari potest, in re, quæ probari non potest, sibi fidem facit. Augustine (*Exp. ad Rom.* § 23): Declaravit ideo se illa facere in corporibus, ut crederetur animas peccatorum dimissione liberare; id est, ut de potestate visibili potestas invisibilis mereretur fidem.

In "*power on earth*" there lies a tacit opposition to "*power in heaven*." "This power is not exercised, as you deem, only by God *in heaven*; but also by the Son of man *on earth*. You rightly assert that it is only exercised by Him who dwelleth in the heavens; but He, who in the person of the Son of man, has descended also upon earth, has brought down this power with Him here. On earth also is One who can speak, and it is done." We have at Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18, "*on earth*" and "*in heaven*," set over against one another in the same antithesis. The parallels, however, are imperfect, since the Church binds and looses by a committed, and not an inherent, power; as has been beautifully said, *Fa-cit in terris opera cœlorum*,—but only in the name and might of her heavenly Head. It is at first somewhat surprising that as "*Son of man*" He claims this power; for this of forgiving sins being a *divine* attribute, we might rather have expected that He would now have called Himself by his better name, since only as *Son of God* such prerogative was his.\* The Alexandrian fathers, in conflict with the Nestorians, pressed this passage in proof of the entire communication of all the properties of Christ's divine nature to his human; so that whatever one had, was so far common to both that it might also be predicated of the other.† Assuredly, unless the two natures had been indissolubly knit together in a single person, no such language could have been used; yet "*Son of man*" being the standing title whereby the Lord was well pleased to designate Himself, bringing out as it did that He was at once one with humanity, and the crown of humanity, it is simpler to regard the term here as merely equivalent to Messiah, without attempting to extort any dogmatic conclusions from it.

The word of the Lord is confirmed and sealed by a sign

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\* See Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 10) for a somewhat different reason why the Lord should here call Himself, Son of man.

† See Cyril of Alexandria, in Cramer, *Catena*, in loc. This is the *communicatio idiomatum*.

following. The man did not refuse to answer this appeal : “*And immediately he arose, took up the bed,\* and went forth before them all;*” they who before blocked up his path, now making way for him, and allowing free egress from the assembly (cf. Mark x. 48, 49).

Of the effects of this miracle on the Pharisees nothing is told ; probably there was nothing good to tell. But the people, far less hardened against the truth, far more receptive of divine impressions, “*were all amazed, and they glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.*” The miracle had done its office. The beholders marvelled at the wonderful work done before their eyes ; and this their marvel deepened into holy fear, which found its utterance in the ascription of glory to God, “*who had given such power unto men.*” We need not suppose that they very accurately explained to themselves, or could have explained to others, their feeling of holy exultation, but they felt truly that what was given to one man, to the Man Christ Jesus, was given for the sake of all, and ultimately to all, that therefore it was indeed given “*unto men.*” They dimly understood that He possessed these powers as the true Head and Representative of the race, and therefore that these gifts to Him were a rightful subject of gladness and thanksgiving for every member of that race.

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\* Arnobius (*Con. Gen.* i. 45), speaking generally of Christ’s healings, but of course with allusion to this, magnifies the contrast of his so lately being carried on, and now carrying, his bed; Suos referebant lectos alienis paulo ante cervicibus lati.

## 10. THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

MATT. viii. 1-4; MARK i. 40-45; LUKE v. 12-16.

IT is said in one place that the Lord confirmed the word of his servants with signs following (Mark xvi. 20). Here He does the same for his own. His discourse upon the Mount is ended, and following close on that discourse, this and other of his most memorable miracles are performed. It is as though He would set his seal to all that He had there taught, would approve Himself a prophet, with right to speak in the language of authority which He has there held\* (Matt. vii. 29). That great revision of the moral code was scarcely ended, ere the opportunity occurred for thus solemnly confirming his word. As He was descending from the mountain, "*there came a leper and worshipped Him*," one, in the language of St. Luke, "*full of leprosy*," so that it was not a spot here and there, but the tetter had spread over his whole body; he was leprous from head to foot. This man had ventured, it may be, to linger on the outskirts of the listening crowd, and, undeterred by the severity of the closing sentences of Christ's discourse, came now to claim the blessings promised at its opening to the suffering and the mourning.

But we shall ill understand this miracle, unless first a few words have been said concerning leprosy in general, and the meaning of the uncleanness attached to it in the Levitical law. The medical details, the distinction between one kind of leprosy and another, as between the white ( $\lambda\epsilon\nu\kappa\eta$ ), which among the Jews was the most frequent, and the yet more

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\* Jerome (in loc.): *Recte post prædicationem atque doctrinam signorum offertur occasio, ut per virtutum miracula præteritus apud audientes sermo firmetur.*

terrible elephantiasis (thought by many to have been that with which Job was visited, and so named because in it the feet swelled to an *elephantine* size), would be here out of place. Only it will be necessary to correct a mistake, common to all writers who, like Michaelis, can see in the Levitical ordinances little more, for the most part, than regulations of police or of a board of health, or, at the highest, rules for the well ordering of an earthly society; who miss altogether a main purpose which these ordinances had — namely, that by them men might be trained into a sense of the cleaving taint which is theirs from birth, into a confession of impurity and of consequent separation from God, and thus into a longing after purity and re-union with Him. I refer to the mistaken assumption that leprosy was catching from one person to another; and that lepers were so carefully secluded from their fellow-men, lest they might communicate the poison of the disease to them; as, in like manner, that the torn garment, the covered lip, the cry “Unclean, unclean” (Lev. xiii. 45), were warnings to all that they should keep aloof, lest unawares touching a leper, or drawing into too great a nearness, they should become partakers of his disease. So far from any danger of the kind existing, all who have looked closest into the matter agree that the sickness was incommunicable by ordinary contact from one person to another. A leper might transmit it to his children,\* or the mother of a leper’s children might take it from him; but it was by no ordinary contact communicable from one person to another.

All the notices in the O. T., as well as in other Jewish books, confirm this assertion that we have here something very much higher than a mere sanitary regulation. Thus, where the law of Moses was not observed, no such exclusion necessarily found place; Naaman the leper commanded the armies of Syria (2 Kin. v. 1); Gehazi, with his leprosy that

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\* See Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, vol. i. p. 359.

never should be cleansed, talked familiarly with the king of apostate Israel (2 Kin. viii. 5). And even where the law of Moses was in force, the stranger and the sojourner were expressly exempted from the ordinances in relation to leprosy; which could not have been, had the disease been contagious; and the motives of the leper's exclusion been not religious, but civil.\* How, moreover, should the Levitical priests, had the disease been this creeping infection, have ever themselves escaped it, obliged as they were by their very office to submit the leper to such actual handling and closest examination? Lightfoot can only explain this by supposing in their case a perpetual miracle.

But there is no need of this. 'The ordinances concerning leprosy had another and far deeper significance, into which it will be needful a little to enter. It is clear that the same principle which made all having to do with death, as mourning, a grave, a corpse, the occasions of a ceremonial uncleanness, inasmuch as all these were signs and consequences of sin, might consistently with this have made every sickness an occasion of uncleanness, each of these being also death beginning, partial death — echoes in the body of that terrible reality, sin in the soul. But instead of this, in a gracious sparing of man, and not pushing the principle to the uttermost, God took but one sickness, one of these visible outcomings of a tainted nature, in which to testify that evil was

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\* See all this abundantly proved in pp. 1086-1089 of the learned dissertation by Rhenferd, *De Lepri Cutis Hebraeorum*, in Meuschen, *Nov. Test. ex Talm. illust.* p. 1057; who concludes his disquisition on this part of the subject thus: Ex quibus, nisi nos omnia fallunt, certe concludimus, præcipuis Judæorum magistris, traditionumque aucto-ribus nunquam in mentem incidisse ullam de lepræ contagio sus-pcionem, omnemque hanc de contagiosis leprâ sententiam plurimis antiquissimisque scriptoribus æque ac Mosi plane fuisse incognitum. Compare the extract from Balsamon, in Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. λεπρός, where, speaking of the custom of the Eastern Church, he says, "They frequent our churches and eat with us, in nothing hindered by the disease." In like manner there was a place for them, though a place apart, in the synagogues.

not from Him, could not dwell with Him. He linked this teaching but with one; by his laws concerning it to train men into a sense of a clinging impurity, which needed a Pure and a Purifier to overcome and expel, and which nothing short of his taking of our flesh could drive out. And leprosy, the sickness of sicknesses, was through these Levitical ordinances selected of God from the whole host of maladies and diseases which had broken in upon man's body. Bearing his testimony against it, He will bear his testimony against that out of which every sickness grows, against sin, as not from Him, as grievous in his sight; and against the sickness itself also as grievous, being as it was a visible manifestation, a direct consequence, of sin, a forerunner of that death, which by the portal of disobedience had found entrance into natures made for immortality.

And terrible indeed, as might be expected, was that disease, round which this solemn teaching revolved. Leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a corrupting of all the humours, a poisoning of the very springs, of life; a dissolution little by little of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away. Aaron exactly describes the appearance which the leper presented to the eyes of the beholders, when, pleading for Miriam, he says, "Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb" (Num. xii. 12). The disease, moreover, was incurable by the art and skill of man;\* not that the leper might not return to health; for, however rare, such cases are contemplated in the Levitical law. But then the leprosy left the man, not in obedience to the skill of the physician, but purely and merely through the good will and mercy of God. This helplessness of man in the matter dictates the speech of Jehoram, who, when Naaman is sent to him, that he may heal him, exclaims, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send

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\* Cyril of Alexandria calls it *πάθος οὐκ iασμον.*

unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" (2 Kin. v. 7); as though the king of Syria had been seeking to fasten a quarrel upon him.

The leper, thus fearfully bearing about in the body the outward and visible tokens of sin in the soul, was dealt with throughout as a sinner, as one in whom sin had reached its highest manifestation, as one *dead* in trespasses and sins. He was himself a dreadful parable of death. He bore about him the emblems of death (Lev. xiii. 45); the rent garments, mourning for himself as one dead; the head bare, as they were wont to have it who were defiled by communion with the dead (Num. vi. 9; Ezek. xxiv. 17); and the lip covered (Ezek. xxiv. 17\*). In the restoration, too, of a leper, precisely the same instruments of cleansing were in use, the cedar-wood, the hyssop, and scarlet, as were used for the cleansing of one rendered impure through a dead body, or aught pertaining to death, and which were never in use upon any other occasion (cf. Num. xix. 6, 13, 18 with Lev. xiv. 4-7). No doubt when David exclaims, "Purge me *with hyssop*, and I shall be clean" (Ps. li. 7), looking through the outward to the inward, even to the true blood of sprinkling, he contemplates himself as a spiritual leper, one who had sinned a sin unto death, needing therefore to be restored to God from the very furthest degree of separation from Him. And being this sign and token of sin, and of sin reaching to and culminating in death, it naturally brought about with it a total exclusion from the camp or city of God. God is not a God of the dead; He has no fellowship with death, for death is the correlative of sin; but only of the living. But the leper was as one dead, and as such was to be put out of the camp.

\* Spencer calls him well, *sepulerum ambulans*; and Calvin: *Pro mortuis habitu sunt, quos lepra a sacro cætu abdicabat*. And when through the Crusades leprosy had been introduced into Western Europe, it was usual to clothe the leper *in a shroud*, and to say for him the masses for the dead.

† Herodotus (i. 138) mentions the same law of exclusion as exist-

(Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2-4; 2 Kin. vii. 3), or afterwards out of the city; and we find this law to have been so strictly enforced, that even the sister of Moses might not be exempted from it (Num. xii. 14, 15); and kings themselves, as Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 21; 2 Kin. xv. 5), must submit to it; men being by this exclusion taught that what here took place in a figure, should take place in the reality with every one who was found in the death of sin: he should be shut out of the true city of God. Thus, taking up and glorifying this and like ordinances of exclusion, St. John declares of the New Jerusalem, "There shall nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27).

Nothing of all this, as need hardly be observed, in the least implied that the leper was a worse or guiltier man than his fellows; though being, as it was, this symbol of sin, it was most often the theocratic punishment, the penalty for offences committed against the theocracy, as those of Miriam, of Gehazi, of Uzziah;\* compare Deut. xxiv. 8, where the warning, "Take heed of the plague of leprosy," is no admonition diligently to observe the laws about leprosy, but to have a care lest any disobedience of theirs should provoke God to visit them with this plague.† The Jews themselves called it "the finger of God," and emphatically, "the stroke." It attacked, they said, first a man's house; and then, if he refused to turn, his clothing; and lastly, should he persist in sin, himself:‡—a fine parable, let the fact have been as it might, of the manner in which God's judgments, if a man

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ing among the Persians, who accounted in like manner that leprosy was an especial visitation on account of especial sins.

\* No doubt the strange apocryphal tradition of Judas Iscariot perishing by the long misery of a leprosy, in its most horrible form of elephantiasis, had this same origin (see Gfrörer, *Die heilige Sage*, vol. i. p. 179).

† See Rhenferd, *De Lepra Cutis Hebraeorum*, in Meuschen, *N. T. ex Talm. illustr.* p. 1082.

‡ Molitor, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 191.

refuse to listen to them, reach ever nearer to the centre of his life. So, too, they said that a man's true repentance was the one condition of his leprosy leaving him.\*

Seeing then that leprosy was this outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption, this sacrament of death, on no fitter form of evil could the Lord of life show forth his power. He will thus prove Himself the conqueror of death in life, as elsewhere of death accomplished: and his victory over this most terrible form of physical evil is therefore fitly urged as a testimony of his Messiahship: "The lepers are cleansed" (Matt. xi. 5). Nor may we doubt that the terribleness of the infliction, the extreme suffering with which it was linked, the horror with which it must have filled the sufferer's mind, as he marked its slow but inevitable progress, to be arrested by no human hand, the ghastly hideousness of its unnatural whiteness (Num. xii. 10; Exod. iv. 6; 2 Kin. v. 27), must all have combined to draw out his pity,† in whom love went hand in hand with power, the Physician and Healer of the bodies as of the souls of men.

The leper with whom we now have to do, came "*and worshipped*" Jesus—an act of profound reverence, as from an inferior to a superior, yet not of necessity a recognition of a divine character in Him to whom this homage was offered. What he would have from the Lord he expresses in words which are remarkable as the utterance of a simple and humble faith, willing to abide the issue, whatever that may be; and having declared its desire, to leave the complying with it or not to a higher wisdom and love: "*Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*"‡ There is no questioning here of the

\* Thus Jerome, following earlier Jewish expositors, explains "smitten of God" (Isai. liii. 4) as =leprosus; and out of that passage and the general belief in leprosy as a νόσος θερήλατος, upgrew the old Jewish tradition of the Messiah being a leper (see Hengstenberg, *Christologie*, vol. i. p. 382).

† Cf. Mark i. 41, ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς σπλαγχνισθεῖς.

‡ Yet the Romanists in vain endeavour to draw from this passage an approval of the timor diffidentiae in our prayers which have rela-

power; nothing of *his* unbelief who said, “*If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us*” (Mark ix. 22). “*And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him*,”\* ratifying and approving his utterance of faith, by making the concession of his request in the very words wherein the request itself had been embodied; “*I will; be thou clean*.† *And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*” This touching of the unclean by Christ is remarkable, seeing that such contact under the law would naturally be avoided, as causing a ceremonial defilement. The Gnostics, adversaries of the law, saw in this Christ’s contempt for its ordinances, a witness that He regarded it as coming not from the good God, but from the evil.‡ Tertullian answers them well.§ He first shows what

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tion to the things of eternal life, such as the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit. These we are to ask, assuredly believing that we have them. There is this uncertainty in the leper’s request, because he is asking a temporal benefit, which must always be asked under conditions, and which may be refused, though to the faithful man the refusing is indeed a granting in a higher form (see Gerhard, *Locc. Theol.* loc. 17, § 138).

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Mare.* iv. 35) : Quoniam ipse erat authenticus Pontifex Dei Patris, inspexit illos secundum Legis arcanum, significantis Christum esse verum disceptatorem et climatorem humanarum macularum.

† Bengel: Echo prompta ad fidem leprosi maturam. Ipsa leprosi oratio continebat verba responsionis optatae.

‡ In Tertullian’s words (*Adv. Mare.* iv. 9) : Ut æmulus Legis testigit leprosum nihil faciens præceptum legis, per contemptum inquinamenti.

§ *Ibid.* : Non pigebit . . . figuratae legis vim ostendere; quæ in exemplo leprosi non contingendi, immo ab omni commercio submovendi, communicationem prohibebat hominis delictis commaculati; eum qualibus et apostolus eibum quoque vetat sumere; participari enim stigmata delictorum, quasi ex contagione, si quis se cum peccatore miscuerit. Itaque Dominus volens altius intelligi Legem, per carnalia spiritualia significantem; et hoc nomine non destruens sed magis exstruens quam pertinentius volebat agnosci, tetigit leprosum, a quo etsi homo inquinari potuisset, Deus utique non inquinaretur, incontaminabilis scilicet. Ita non præscribetur illi quod debuerit legem observare, et non contigere immundum, quem contactus immundi non erat inquinaturus. He is not so successful in his interpretation of the spiritual significance, when elsewhere (*De Pud.* 20) he goes into more details in the matter. So Calvin (in loc.): Ea est in Christo puritas, quæ omnes sordes et inquinamenta absorbeat, neque

was the deeper meaning of forbidding to touch the ceremonially unclean, namely, that we should not defile our souls through partaking in other men's sins; as St. Paul, transfiguring these ceremonial prohibitions into moral, exclaims, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, *and touch not the unclean thing*" (2 Cor. vi. 17). These outer prohibitions held good for all, till He came, the Pure, to whom all things were pure; who, incontaminable Himself, feared not the contamination of a touch; for in Him, first among men, the advancing tide of this world's evil was effectually arrested and rolled back. Another would have defiled *himself* by touching the leper; but He, Himself remaining undefiled, cleansed him whom He touched; for in Him health overcame sickness,—and purity, defilement,—and life, death.

"*And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man.*" Ambrose and others see in this prohibition to divulge the cure a lesson of Christ to his followers that they also should avoid ostentation in the good which they do; lest, as he adds, they should be themselves taken with a worse leprosy than any which they healed.\* I do not think so. If the motive was external, and not grounded on the inner moral condition of the man, it more probably was, lest his stiller ministry should be hindered by the untimely concourse of multitudes, drawn to Him by the hope of worldly benefits (which by this very occasion did occur, Mark i. 45); perhaps also by the premature violence of his enemies, roused to a more active hate by the

se contaminat leprosum tangendo, neque Legem transgreditur; and he beautifully finds in his stretching forth the hand and touching, a symbol of the Incarnation: Nec tamen quidquam inde maculæ contraxit, sed integer manens, sordes omnes nostras exhaustis, et nos perfudit suâ sanctitate. Compare H. de Sto. Victore: Lepram tetigit, et mundus permansit, quia veram humanitatis formam sumpsit, et culpam non contraxit.

\* *Exp. in Luc. v. 5:* Sed ne lepra transire possit in medicum, unusquisque Dominicæ humilitatis exemplo jactantiam vitet. Cur enim præcipitur nemui dicere, nisi ut doceret non vulganda nostra beneficia, sed premenda? So Chrysostom: Ἀτίφος ἡμᾶς παρασκευάζων καὶ ἀκενοδόξους.

fame of his mighty deeds (John xi. 46, 47\*). But, as already has been observed, the injunction to one that he should proclaim, to another that he should conceal, the great things which God had done for him, may have had a deeper motive, and have been grounded on the different moral conditions of the persons healed. Grotius and Bengel suggest very plausibly that the “*See thou tell no man*” here is to be taken with this limitation—“till thou hast done that which I enjoin thee.” He then proceeds to impart his injunction, “*Go thy way, show thyself to the priests, and offer the gift that Moses commanded.*” Till this was done, he should say nothing; lest, if a rumour of these things had gone before him, the priests at Jerusalem, out of envy, out of a desire to depreciate Christ’s work, might have denied that the man had ever been a leper, or else that he was now truly cleansed.† We may perhaps in this way account for the notice of St. Mark, “*He forthwith sent him away,*” or, put him forth;‡ would allow no lingering, but required him to hasten on his errand, lest a report of the cure should outrun him that was cured.

“*For a testimony unto them,*” some understand “for a proof even to these gainsayers that I am come, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, not to remove even a shadow, till I have brought in the substance in its room.§ These Levitical

\* See a good note by Hammond on Matt. viii. 4. Calvin: Tanta erat vulgi opportunitas in flagitandis miraculis, ut non restaret doctrinæ locus.

† Thus the *Auct. Oper. Imperf. (Hom. xxi.)*: Ideo eum jubet offerre munera, ut si postmodum vellent eum expellere, diceret eis: Munera quasi a mundato suscepistis, et quomodo me quasi leprosum expellitis? Si leprosus adhuc fui, munera accipere non debuistis quasi a mundato: si autem mundus factus sum, repellere non debetis quasi leprosum.

‡ Ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν.

§ So Tertullian in his controversy with the Gnostics (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 9): Quantum enim ad gloriæ humanæ aversionem pertinebat, vetuit eum divulgare, quantum autem ad tutelam Legis, jussit ordinem impleri. Bengel: Ut testimonium illis exhibeatur, de Messiâ præsente, Legi non deroganti.

offerings I still allow and uphold, while as yet the better offering, to which they point, has not been made.”\* We should understand the words rather, “*for a testimony against them* (cf. Mark vi. 11; Luke ix. 5); for a witness against their unbelief, who refuse to give credence to Me, even while I am legitimating my claims by such mighty works as these; works whose reality they have ratified themselves, accepting thy gift, re-admitting thee, as one truly cleansed, into the congregation”† (John v. 36; xv. 24). For his going to the priest had this object, that the priest might ascertain if really his leprosy was cleansed (Lev. xiv. 3), might, if so, accept his gift,‡ and offer it as an atonement for him; and then, when all this was duly accomplished, *pronounce* him clean, and reinstate him in all his rights and privileges again.§

\* Augustine (*Quest. Evang.* ii. qu. 3): *Quia nondum esse cœperat sacrificium sanctum sanctorum, quod corpus ejus est.*

† Maldonatus: *Ut inexcusabiles essent sacerdotes, si in ipsum non erederent, ejus miracula probassent.* Witsius (*De Mirac. Jesu*, i. p. 32): *Idecirco addidit Jesus haec ita juberet eis μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς, ne deinceps ullā specie negri miraeulum possit, et ut, dum eorum judicio approbatus, munus obtulisset, testimonium contra se haberent, impiè se facere, quod Christo obluctarentur.*

‡ Δῶπον is used for a *bloody* offering by the LXX, as Gen. iv. 4; Lev. i. 2, 3, 10; cf. Heb. viii. 4, where the δῶπα = δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας of the verse preceding, therefore also of ver. 1; cf. Matt. v. 23. Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 9) brings out too much the idea of a *thank-offering* in this gift of the cleansed leper, which properly it was not, though the words are admirable, applied to such: *Argumenta enim figurata utpote prophetatæ Legis adhuc in suis imaginibus tuebantur, quâ significabant hominem quondam peccatorem, verbo mox Dei emaculatum, offerre debere munus Deo apud templum, orationem scilicet et actionem gratiarum apud Ecclesiam, per Christum Jesum, catholicum Patris Sacerdotem.*

§ All the circumstances of the leper’s cleansing yielded themselves so aptly to the scheme of Church satisfactions, as it gradually shaped itself in the Middle Ages, that it is not to be wondered at that it was used at least as an illustration, often as an argument. Yet even then we find the great truth, of Christ the alone Cleanser, often brought out as the most prominent. Thus by Gratian (*De Pænitentiâ*, dist. i.): *Ut Dominus ostenderet quod non sacerdotali judicio, sed largitate divinæ gratiæ peccator emundatur, leprosum tangendo mundavit, et postea sacerdoti sacrificium ex lege offerre præcepit.* Leprosus enim tangitur, cum respectu divinæ pietatis mens peccatoris illustrata com-

pungitur. . . . Leprosus semetipsum sacerdoti repræsentat, dum peccatum suum sacerdoti pœnitens confitetur. Sacrificium ex lege offert, dum satisfactionem Ecclesiæ judicio sibi impositam factis exsequitur. Sed antequam ad sacerdotem perveniat, emundatur, dum per contritionem cordis ante confessionem oris peccati veniâ indulgetur. Cf. Pet. Lombard (*Sent.* iv. dist. 18): Dominus leprosum saniitate prius per se restituit, deinde ad sacerdotes misit, quorum judicio ostenderetur mundatus. . . . Quia etsi aliquis apud Deum sit solutus, non tamen in facie Ecclesiæ solutus habetur, nisi per judicium sacerdotis. In solvendis ergo culpis vel retinendis ita operatur sacerdos evangelicus et judicat, sicut olim legalis in illis, qui contami-nati erant leprâ, quæ peccatum signat.

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## 11. THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.

MATT. viii. 5-13; LUKE vii. 1-10.

THERE has been already occasion to denounce the error of confounding this healing with that of the nobleman's son recorded by St. John (iv. 46). But while we may not thus seek forcibly to harmonize two narratives which relate events entirely different, there is matter still in the records of this miracle on which the harmonist may exercise his skill. There are two independent accounts, one given by St. Matthew, the other by St. Luke; and, according to the first Evangelist, the centurion comes a petitioner in his own person for the boon which he desires; according to the third, he sends others as mediators between himself and the Lord, as intercessors for him, with other differences which follow and flow out of this. Doubtless the latter is the more strictly literal account of the circumstance, as it actually came to pass; St. Matthew, who is briefer, telling it as though the centurion had done in his own person what, in fact, he did by the intervention of others—an exchange of persons of which all historical narrative and all the language of our common life is full.\* A comparison of Mark x. 35 with Matt. xx. 20 will furnish another example of the same.

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\* Faustus the Manichaean uses these apparent divergences of the two narratives, and the greater fulness of the one account than of the other, it being said in one that "*many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God,*" while this is omitted in the other, to cast a slight and suspicion upon both. It is, of course, this last declaration which makes him bent anyhow on getting rid of this history. The calumniator of the Old Covenant, he cannot endure to hear of the chiefs of that covenant sitting down in the first places at the heavenly banquet. Augustine's admirable reply contains much which is applicable still, on the unfair way

*"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home grievously tormented."* This centurion, probably one of the Roman garrison of Capernaum, was by birth a heathen; but, like another of the same rank in the Acts (x. 1), was one of many who were at this time deeply feeling the emptiness and falsehood of all the polytheistic religions, and who had attached themselves by laxer or closer bonds to the congregation of Israel and the worship of Jehovah, finding in Judaism a satisfaction of some of the deepest needs of their souls, and a promise of the satisfaction of all.\* He was one among the many who are distinguished from the seed of Abraham, yet described as "fearing God," or "worshipping God," of whom we read so often in the Acts (xiii. 43, 50; xvi. 14; xvii. 4, 17; xviii. 7), the proselytes, whom the providence of God had so wonderfully prepared in all the great cities of the Greek and Roman world as a link of communication between Gentile and Jew, in contact with both,—holding to the first by their race, and to the last by their religion; and who must have greatly helped to the ultimate fusion of both into one Christian Church.

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in which gainsayers find or make discrepancies where indeed there are none,—as though one narrator telling some detail in an event, contradicts another, who passes over that detail,—one saying that a person did this, contradicts another who states more particularly that he did it by the agency and intervention of another. All that we demand, he says, is, that men should be as fair to Scripture as to any other historic record; should suffer it to speak to men as they are wont to speak one to another (*Con. Faust.* xxxiii. 7, 8): Quid ergo, cum legimus, obliviscimur quemadmodum loqui soleamus? An Scriptura Dei aliter nobiscum fuerat quam nostro more locutura? Cf. *De Cons. Evang.* ii. 20.

\* Remarkably enough all the Roman centurions who figure in the sacred narrative are honourably mentioned; thus, besides these two, the centurion who watched by the cross of Christ, and exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47); and Julius, who so courteously entreated Paul on his way to Rome (Acts xxvii. 3, 43). Probably, in the general wreck of the moral institutions of the heathen world, the Roman army was one of the few in which something of the old virtues survived.

But with the higher matters which he had learned from his intercourse with the people of the covenant, he had learned no doubt this, that all heathens, all “sinners of the Gentiles,” were “without;” that there was a middle wall of partition between them and the children of the stock of Abraham; that they were to worship only as in the outer court, not presuming to draw near to the holy place. And thus, as we learn from St. Luke (vii. 3), he did not himself approach, but “*when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant,*” a servant, as St. Luke has before told us, who “*was dear unto him,*”\* but now “*was sick and ready to die.*” The Jewish elders executed their commission with zeal, pleading for him as one whose affection for the chosen people, and active well-doing in their behalf, had merited this return of favour: “*They besought Him instantly, saying that he was worthy for whom He should do this; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them.*”

But presently even this request seemed to the maker of it too bold. In his true and ever-deepening humility he counted it a presumption to have asked, though by the intervention of others, the presence under his roof of one so highly exalted. “*And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof.*” It was not merely that he, a heathen, might claim no near access to the King of Israel; but there was, no doubt, beneath this and mingling with this, a deep inward feeling of his own personal

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\* Calvin: *Iucas hoc modo dubitationem prævenit, quæ subire poterat lectorum animos: scimus enim, non habitos fuisse servos eo in pretio, ut de ipsorum vitâ tam anxi essent domini, nisi qui singulari industria vel fide vel aliâ virtute sibi gratiam acquisierant. Significat ergo Lucas non vulgare fuisse sordidumque mancipium, sed fidelem et rarib[us] ornatum servum qui eximiâ gratiâ apud dominum polleret: hinc tanta illius vitae cura et tam studiosa commendatio.*

unworthiness and unfitness for a close communion with a holy being, which was the motive of this message. And thus, in Augustine's words, "counting himself unworthy that Christ should enter into his doors, he was counted worthy that Christ should enter into his heart"—a far better boon; for Christ sat down in the houses of many, as of that proud self-righteous Pharisee (Luke vii. 36), whose hearts for all this were not the less empty of his presence. But this centurion received *Him* in his heart, whom he did not receive in his house.† And, indeed, every little trait of his character, as it comes forth in the sacred narrative, points him out as one in whom the seed of God's word would find the ready and prepared soil of a good and honest heart. For, not to speak of those prime graces, faith and humility, which so eminently shone forth in him,—the affection which he had evidently won from those Jewish elders, the zeal which had stirred him to build a house for the worship of the true God, his earnest care and anxiety about a slave,—one so commonly excluded from all earnest human sympathies on the part of his master, that even a Cicero excuses himself for feeling deeply the death of such a one in his household,—all these traits of character combine to present him to us as one of those "children of God" scattered abroad in the world, whom the Son of God came that He might gather together into one (John xi. 52).

The manner is very noteworthy in which the Roman officer, by help of an analogy drawn from the circle of things with which he himself is most familiar, by a comparison bor-

\* *Serm. lxii. 1:* *Dicendo se indignum præstitit dignum, non in ejus parietes, sed in ejus cor Christus intraret.* Neque hoc diceret cum tantâ fide et humilitate, nisi illum quem timebat intrare in dominum suam, corde gestaret. Nam non erat magna felicitas si Dominus Jesus intraret in parietes ejus et non esset in pectore ejus (Luc. vii. 36).

† Augustine (*Serm. lxxvii. 8*): *Teeto non recipiebat, corde receperat.* Quanto humilior, tanto capacior, tanto plenior. Colles enim aquam repellunt, valles implentur.

rowed from his own military experience,\* makes easier to himself his act of faith. He knows that Christ's *word* will be sufficient; for, he adds, "*I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*" His argument is here from the less to the greater. "I am," he would say, "one occupying only a subordinate place, set *under* authority, a subaltern, with tribunes and commanders over me. Yet, notwithstanding, those that are under me, obey me; and my word is potent with them. I have power to send them hither and thither, and they go at my bidding, so that, myself sitting still, I can yet have the things accomplished which I would. How much more Thou, not set, as I am, in a subordinate place, but who art as a Prince over the host of heaven,† who hast Angels and spirits to obey thy word and run swiftly at thy command, canst fulfil from a distance all the good pleasure of thy will. What need, then, that Thou shouldest come to my house; only commission one of these genii of healing, who will execute speedily the errand of grace on which Thou shalt send him."‡ He contemplates the relation of Christ to the

\* Bengel: *Sapientia fidelis ex ruditate militari pulchre clueens.*

† The *στρατιὰ οὐράνιος* (Luke ii. 13. cf. Rev. xix. 14). How true a notion this indeed was, which in his simple faith the centurion had conceived for himself, we see from those words of our Lord's, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels" (Matt. xxvi. 53)? Jerome (in loc.): *Volens ostendere Dominum quoque non per adventum tantum corporis, sed per angelorum ministeria posse implere quod vellet.* Fuller (*Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, vol. i. p. 109) takes it a little differently—"Concluding from his own authority over his soldiers; that Christ, by a more absolute power, as Lord High Marshal of all maladies, without his personal presence, could by his bare word of command order any disease to march or retreat at his pleasure."

‡ Severus (in Cramer, *Catena*): *Εἰ γὰρ ἔγώ στρατιώτης ὁν, καὶ ὑπὸ ἔξουσίαν βασιλέως τελῶν, τοῖς δορυφόροις ἐντέλλομαι, πῶς οὐ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ὁ τῶν ἄνω καὶ ἀγγελικῶν δυνάμεων ποιητής, ὃ θέλεις ἐρεῖς καὶ γενήσεται;* and Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. xlvi. 9, and Serm. lxii. 2*): *Si ergo ego, inquit, homo sub potestate, jubendi habeo potestatem, quid tu possis, cui omnes serviunt potestates?* And Bernard more

spiritual kingdom in an aspect as original as it is grand. The Lord appears to him as the true Cæsar and *Imperator*, the highest over the hierarchy, not of earth, but of heaven (Col. i. 16).

In all this there was so wonderful a union of faith and humility, that it is nothing strange to read that the Lord Himself was filled with admiration: “*When Jesus heard it, He marvelled,\* and said to them that followed, Verily, I say*

than once brings out this as an eminent and characteristic feature of his humility; thus *Ep. ccxci.*: O prudens et vere corde humilis anima! dicturus quod prælatus esset militibus, repressit extollentiam confessione subjectionis: immo præmisit subjectionem, ut pluris sibi esset quod suberat, quam quod præerat; and beautifully, *De Off. Episc.* 8: Non jaetabat potestatem, quam nec solam protulit, nec priorem. . . . Præmissa siquidem est humilitas, ne altitudo præcipitet. Nec enim locum invenit arrogantia, ubi tam clarum humilitatis insigne præcesserat. Such explanation appears preferable to any of those which make ἀνθρωπος ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, a man *in* authority. Rettig (*Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* vol. xi. p. 472), reading with Lachmann ἀνθ. ὑπὸ ἐξουσ. τασσόμενος (which last word, however, should not have been admitted into the text), has an ingenious but untenable explanation in the latter and less eligible sense. Different from all these, and entirely original, is the view of the passage taken by the *Auct. Oper. Imperf.*, who agrees so far with the right interpretation that he makes ἀνθρωπος ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, a man in a subordinate position; but then will not allow, but expressly denies, that it is thus a comparison by way of contrast between himself and the Lord, which the centurion is drawing,—that he is magnifying the Lord’s *highest* place by comparing it with his own only subordinate, but that rather he is *in all things* likening the one to the other: “As I am under worldly authorities, and yet have those whom I may send, so Thou, albeit under thine heavenly Father, hast yet a heavenly host at thy bidding.” (Ego sum homo sub potestate alterius, tamen habeo potestatem jubendi eis qui sub me sunt. Nec enim impeditur jubere minores, propter quod ipse sum sub majoribus; sed ab illis quidem jubeor, sub quibus sum; illis autem jubeo, qui sub me sunt: sic et tu, quamvis sub potestate Patris sis, secundum quod homo es, habes tamen potestatem jubendi angelis tuis, nec impeditur jubere inferioribus, propter quod ipse habes superiorem.) This interpretation, though just capable of a fair meaning, probably expresses the Arian tendencies of the author.

\* But since all wonder properly so called, arises from the meeting with something unexpected and hitherto unknown, how could the Lord, to whom all things were known, be said to marvel? To this some have answered that Christ did not so much actually wonder,

*unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”\**\* St. Matthew alone records these words, which beforehand we should rather have expected to find recorded by St. Luke; for he, the companion of the Apostle to the Gentiles, loves best to give prominence to that side of our Lord’s ministry, on which it contemplated not merely the Jewish nation, but the heathen world (iii. 38; x. 1; xv. 11-32). Where faith is, there will be the kingdom of God; so that this saying already contains a warning to his Jewish hearers, of the danger they are in of forfeiting blessings whereof others are showing themselves worthier than they.† But the words which follow are far more explicit; “*For I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,*” shall be partakers of the heavenly festival, which shall be at the inauguration of the kingdom; “*but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;*”—in other words, the kingdom should be taken from them, “and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. xxi. 43); be-

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as commend to us that which was worthy of our admiration. Thus Augustine (*De Gen. Con. Man.* i. 8): *Quod mirabatur Dominus, nobis mirandum esse significabat*; and he asks in another place (*Con. Adv. Leg. et Proph.* i. 7), how should not He have known before the measure of that faith, which He Himself had created? (An vero aliis eam in corde centurionis operabatur, quam ipse qui mirabatur?) Yet a solution like this brings an unreality into parts of our Lord’s conduct, as though He did some things for show and the effect which they would have on others, instead of all his actions having their deepest root in his own nature, being the truthful exponents of his own most inmost being. On the other hand, to say that according to his human nature He might have been ignorant of some things, seems to threaten a Nestorian severance of the Person of Christ. But the whole question of the *communio idiomatum*, with its precipices on either side, is one of the hardest in the whole domain of theology. See Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* 3<sup>a</sup>, qu. 15, art. 8; and Gerhard, *Lect. Theol.* iv. 2, 4.

\* Augustine: In olivâ non inveni, quod inveni in oleastro. Ergo oliva superbiens præcidatur; oleaster humilis inseratur. Vide inserentem, vide præcedentem. Cf. *In Joh.* tract. xvi. ad finem.

† Augustine: Alienigenæ carne, domestici corde.

cause of their unbelief, they, the natural branches of the olive tree, should be broken off, and in their room the wild olive should be grafted in (Rom. xi. 17-24; Matt. iii. 9).

*“And Jesus said unto the centurion,”* or to him in his messengers, *“Go thy way, and as thou hast believed,\* so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour;”*—not merely was there a remission of the strength of the disease, but it left him altogether. There is a certain difficulty respecting the exact nature of the complaint from which he was thus graciously delivered. In St. Matthew it is described as *“palsy;”* with which the *“grievously tormented”* which immediately follows, seems not altogether to agree, nor yet the report in St. Luke, that he was *“ready to die;”* since palsy in itself neither brings with it violent paroxysms of pain, nor is it in its nature mortal. But paralysis with contraction of the joints is accompanied with intense suffering, and, when united, as it much oftener is in the hot climates of the East and of Africa than among us, with tetanus, both *“grievously torments;”* and rapidly brings on dissolution.†

\* Bernard (*Serm. iii. De Anima*): Oleum misericordiae in vase fiduciae ponit.

† At 1 Macc. ix. 55, 56, it is said of Alcimus, who is described “as taken with a palsy,” that he died presently “with great torment” (*μετὰ βασάνου μεγάλης*), as here this servant is described as *δευός βασανιζόμενος* (see Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Paralytische*). In St. Matthew and St. Mark those thus afflicted are always *παραλυτικοί*, in St. Luke, both in his Gospel and in the Acts, *παραλελυμένοι*.

## 12. THE DEMONIAC IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM.

MARK i. 23-26; LUKE iv. 33-36.

THE healing of this demoniac, the second miracle of the kind which the Evangelists record at any length, may not offer so much remarkable as some similar works, but has not the less its own special points of interest. What distinguishes it the most, although finding parallels elsewhere (see Mark i. 34; Matt. viii. 29), is the testimony which the evil spirit bears to Christ, and *his* refusal to accept it. This history thus stands in very instructive relation with another in the Acts (xvi. 16-18). There in like manner, a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination bears witness to Paul and his company, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation;" and Paul there, as his Master here, will not suffer that hell should bear witness to heaven, the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and commands with power the unclean spirit to come out.

Our Lord was teaching, as was his wont upon a Sabbath, in the synagogue of Capernaum; and the people were already wondering at the authority with which He taught. But He was not mighty in word only, but also in work, and it was ordained by the providence of his Heavenly Father, that the opportunity should here be offered Him for making yet deeper the impression on his hearers, and confirming the word with signs following. "*There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,*" and this spirit felt at once the nearness of One, who was stronger than all that kingdom whereunto he belonged; who should destroy the works of the devil. And with the instinct and consciousness of this danger which so nearly threatened his usurped dominion, he

cried out,—not the man himself, but the evil spirit,—“*saying, Let us alone :\* what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth ?† art Thou come to destroy us ?*” (Matt. viii. 29 ; 2 Pet. ii. 4 ; Jude 6). “*I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.*” Earth has not recognized her king, disguised as He is like one of her own children ; but heaven has borne witness to Him (Luke ii. 11 ; Matt. iii. 17), and now hell must bear its witness too ; “the devils believe and tremble.” The unholy, which is resolved to be unholy still, understands well that its death-knell has sounded, when “*the Holy One of God*” (compare Ps. xvi. 10 for the first appearance of this phrase) has come to make war against it.

But, What, it may be asked, could have been the motive to this testimony, thus borne? It is strange that the evil spirit should thus, without compulsion, proclaim to the world the presence in the midst of it of the Holy One of God, who should thus bring all the unholy, on which he battened and by which he lived, to an end. Was it not to be expected rather that he would have denied, or sought to obscure, the glory of his person? It cannot be replied that this was an unwilling confession to the truth, forcibly extorted by Christ’s superior power, since it displeased Him in whose favour it professed to be borne, and the mouth of its utterer is gagged.‡ It remains then either, with Theophylact and Grotius, to take this as the cry of base and abject fear, that with fawning and flatteries would fain avert from itself the doom, which with Christ’s presence in the world must evidently be near ;—to compare, as Jerome does, this exclamation to that of the fugitive slave, dreaming of nothing but

\* \*Εα, not the imperative from έάω, but an interjection of terror, wrung out by the φοβερὰ ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως (Heb. x. 27),—unless indeed the interjection was originally this imperative.

† Ναζαρηνός here. The word appears in the N. T. in two other forms, Ναζαραῖος and Ναζωραῖος. Of all these the last is the most frequent.

‡ Φυρώθητι, cf. Matt. xxii. 12 ; and for the word used in its literal sense, 1 Cor. ix. 9.

stripes and torments when he encounters unawares his well-known lord, and now seeking by any means to deprecate his anger;\*—or else, and so Christ's immediately stopping of his mouth would seem to argue, this testimony was intended only to do harm, to injure the estimation of Him in whose behalf it was rendered. It was to bring the truth itself into suspicion and discredit, when it received its attestation from the spirit of lies :† and thus these confessions of Jesus as the Christ may have been intended only to traverse and mar his great purpose and plan, even as we see Mark iii. 22 following hard on Mark iii. 11. Therefore the Lord would not allow this testimony: “*Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him*”‡ (cf. ver. 41); not “*The Lord rebuke thee*” (Jude 9; cf. Acts xvi. 18), but rebuking in his own name and by his own power.

It might seem as though the evil spirit was not altogether and at once obedient to the word of Christ, that it was not altogether a word of power; since He bade him to hold his peace, and yet in the next verse we learn that only after “*he had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him*” (cf. Acts viii. 7). But in truth he *was* obedient to this command of silence; he did not *speak* any more, and that was

\* Grotius: Vult Jesum blanditiis demulcere, cui se certando imparem erat expertus. Jerome (*Comm. in Matt. ix.*): Velut si servi fugitivi post multum temporis dominum suum videant; nihil aliud nisi de verberibus deprecantur.

† Thus, with a slight difference, Tertullian (*Adv. Marc. iv. 7*): Incepuit eum Jesus, plane ut invidiosum et in ipsâ confessione petulantem et male adulantem, quasi hæc esset summa gloria Christi, si ad perditionem dæmonum venisset, et non potius ad hominum salutem.

‡ Tertullian (*Adv. Marc. iv. 8*): Illius erat, præconium immundi spiritûs respuere, cui Sancti abundabant. Calvin: Duplex potest esse ratio, cur loqui non sineret: una generalis quod nondum maturum plenæ revelationis tempus advenerat; altera specialis, quod illos repudiabat præcones ac testes suæ divinitatis, qui laude suâ nihil aliud quam maculam, et sinistram opinionem aspergere illi poterant. Atque hæc posterior indubia est, quia testatum oportuit esse hostile dissidium, quod habebat æternæ salutis et vitæ auctor cum mortis principie ejusque ministris.

what our Lord forbade: this loud cry was nothing but an inarticulate utterance of rage and pain. Neither is there any contradiction between St. Luke, who says that the evil spirit "*hurt him not*," and St. Mark, who describes him as having "*torn him*;" he did not do him any permanent injury; no doubt what evil he could do him he did. St. Luke himself reports that he cast him on the ground; with which the phrase of the earlier Evangelist, that he threw him into strong convulsions, in fact consents. We have at Mark ix. 26 (cf. Luke ix. 42) an analogous case, only with worse symptoms accompanying the going out of the foul spirit; for what the devil cannot keep as his own, he will, if he can, destroy; even as Pharaoh never treated the children of Israel worse than just when they were escaping from his grasp. Something similar is evermore finding place; and Satan tempts, plagues, and buffets none so much as those who are in the act of being delivered from his tyranny for ever.

St. Mark never misses an opportunity of recording the wonderful impression which Christ's miracles made on the witnesses of them,—the astonishment, the amazement, with which these were filled. He lays nowhere greater emphasis on this than here: "*And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him.*"

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### 13. THE HEALING OF SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER.

MATT. viii. 14-17; MARK i. 29-31; LUKE iv. 38-40.

THIS miracle is by St. Mark and St. Luke linked immediately, and in a manner that marks historic connexion, with that which has just come under our notice. Thus St. Mark : “*And forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew.*” In St. Luke it is only “*Simon's house;*”\* his stronger personality causing Andrew, though probably with the natural prerogatives of an elder brother, and certainly with spiritual, as the earlier called and the bringer of his brother to Jesus, here as elsewhere to fall into the background. It was probably to eat bread that the Lord on this Sabbath day entered into that house. “*And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother laid and sick of a fever;*”—“*a great fever;*” as St. Luke informs us, as he also mentions the intercession of some on her behalf; “*they besought Him for her.*” We owe to him also the remarkable phrase, “*He rebuked the fever,*” even as on another occasion “*He rebuked the winds and the sea.*” St. Matthew alone records that “*He touched her hand*” (cf. Dan. x. 16; Rev. i. 17; Luke vii. 14; viii. 54). From that life-giving touch of his health and strength flowed into her wasted frame; “*the fever left her,*” and left her not in that state of extreme weakness and exhaustion which fever usually leaves behind, when in

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\* Maldonatus is greatly troubled that Peter should have a house, while it has been said before that he “left all,” and to allow this really to have been Simon's house appears to him to militate against the perfection of his state. His explanation and that of most of the Romish expositors is, that this house was one which *had been* Peter's, and which he had made over to his wife's mother, when he determined to follow Christ in the absolute renunciation of all things. It is needless; the renunciation was entire in will (see Matt. xix. 27), and ready in act to be carried out into all its details, as necessity arose.

the ordinary course of things it has abated ;\* not slowly convalescent ; but so entire and unusual was her cure, that “*immediately she arose, and ministered unto them,*”—providing for her sons’ guests what was necessary for their entertainment ;—serving, it has been often observed, as a pattern to all restored to spiritual health, that they should use this strength in ministering to Christ and to his people.†

The fame of this miracle, following close upon another wrought on the same day, spread so rapidly, that “*when the even was come,*” or, as St. Mark has it, “*when the sun did set,*” “*they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils ; and He cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.*” There are two explanations of this little circumstance, by all three Evangelists carefully recorded, that only when the sun was setting or had actually set, they brought their sick to Jesus ;—either, as Hammond and Ols hausen suggest, that they waited till the heat of the middle day, which these were ill able to bear, was past, and brought them in the cool of the evening ; or else to assume that this day being a Sabbath (cf. Mark i. 21, 29, 32), they were unwilling to violate its sacred rest. This in their own esteem they would have done by carrying their sick to be healed before the close of that day. It did close, as is well known, at sunset. Thus Chrysostom, on one occasion,‡ although on another he sees here more generally an evidence of the faith and eagerness of the people, who, even when the day was spent, still came streaming to Christ, and laying their sick at his feet.

\* Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.) observes this : *Natura hominum istiusmodi est, ut post febrim magis lassescant corpora, et incipiente sanitate ægrotationis mala sentiant.*

† Gerhard (*Harm. Evang.* 38) : *Simul vero docemur, q[ua]ndo spiritualiter sanati sumus, ut membra nostra præbeamus arma justitiae Dei [Deo?] et ipsi serviamus in justitiâ et sanctitate coram ipso, inservientes proximo, et membris Christi, sicut hæc muliercula Christo et discipulis ministrat.*

‡ In Cramer, *Catena*, vol. i. p. 278.

The quotation which St. Matthew makes from Isaiah (liii. 4), after he has recorded the numerous healings which Christ upon that day effected, is not without its difficulties; “*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.*”\* The difficulty does not lie in the fact that St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 24) finds in the same words a prophecy of the Messiah rather as the bearer of the *sins*, than the healer of the *sicknesses*, of his people. As far as the words go, St. Matthew is nearer to the original, which declares He came under our sicknesses and our sorrows, the penal consequences of our sins; and any apparent difference between the two inspired writers vanishes at once, when we keep in mind the intimate connexion which Scripture every where asserts between sin and suffering; the disorder of our moral, and the disorder of our physical, being; Gen. iii. 17, 19, being the first in the series; and not Scripture only; for probably there is no truth which has imprinted itself more deeply on all the language of men; few languages failing to possess a word like our own “evil,” with its double meaning of sin and of calamity.

But the application of the verse is more embarrassing. Those with best right to be heard on the matter, deny that “*bore*” can mean “*bore away*,” or that “*took*” can be accepted in the sense of “*removed*,” and affirm that the words must mean a taking *upon Himself* of the sufferings and sorrows from which He delivered his people. But in what sense did our Lord take upon Himself the sicknesses which He healed? Did He not rather abolish, and remove them altogether out of the way? It is, no doubt, a perfectly scriptural thought, that Christ is the *κάθαρμα*, the *φάρμακον*, the *pia-culum*, who is to draw to Himself and to absorb all the evils of the world, in whom they are all to meet, that in Him they all

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\* St. Matthew here forsakes the Septuagint, which would not have answered his purpose (*οὗτος τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει, καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὁδονάται*), and gives an independent translation.

may be abolished and done away ; yet He did not *become* this through the healing of diseases, any more than through any other isolated acts of his life and conversation. He was not more this piacular expiation, after He had healed these sicknesses than before. We can understand his being said in his death and passion to come Himself under the burden of those sufferings and pains from which He released others ; but how can this be affirmed of Him when He was engaged in works of beneficent activity ? Then He was rather chasing away diseases and pains altogether,\* than Himself undertaking them.

An explanation, which has found favour with many, has been suggested by the circumstance that on this occasion his labours were not ended with the day, but reached far into the evening ;—so that He removed, indeed, sicknesses from others, but with painfulness to Himself, and with the weariness attendant upon labours unseasonably drawn out ; and thus may not unfitly be said to have taken those sicknesses on Himself.† Olshausen adopts, though in somewhat more spiritual a manner, this explanation. The obscurity of the passage, he says, only disappears when we learn to think more *really* of the healing activity of Christ, as an actual outstreaming and out-

\* Some have been tempted to make here  $\lambda\alpha\rho\beta\acute{a}n\epsilon\iota\omega$  and  $\beta\alpha\sigma\tau\acute{a}\zeta\epsilon\iota\omega$  =  $\hat{\alpha}\phi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\omega$ , as Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iii. 17), abstulit. But this plainly will not suit with the original, where Messiah is described not as the physician of men, but the sufferer for men ; or, at any rate, only the first through being the second.

† So Woltzogen, whom, despite his Socinian tendencies, here Witsius (*Meletem. Leidens.* p. 402) quotes with approbation : *Adeo ut locus hic prophetae bis fuerit adimpletus ; semel cum Christus corporis morbos abstulit ab hominibus non sine summâ molestiâ ac defatigatione, dum ad vesperam usque circa ægrorum curationem occupatus, quodammodo ipsas hominum ægritudines in se recipiebat. . . . Alterâ vice, cum suis perpessionibus ac morte spiritualiter morbos nostrorum peccatorum a nobis sustulit.* Cf. Grotius, *in loc.* Theophylact had led the way to this explanation, finding an emphasis in the fact that the sick were brought to Jesus *in the evening*, out of season ( $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{a}$   $\kappa\alpha\rho\acute{v}\acute{o}\nu$ ), though he does not bring that circumstance into connexion with these words of Isaiah.

breathing of the fulness of his inner life. As therefore physical exertion physically wearied Him (John iv. 6), so did spiritual activity long drawn out spiritually exhaust Him ; and this exhaustion, as all other forms of suffering, He underwent for our sakes. A statement questionable in its doctrine : moreover, I cannot believe that the Evangelist meant to lay any such stress upon the unusual or prolonged labours of this day, or that he would not as freely have cited these words in relating any other cures which the Lord performed. Not this day only, even had it been a day of especial weariness, but every day of his earthly life was a coming under, upon his part, of those evils which He removed from others. For that which is the law of all true helping, namely, that the burden which you would lift, you must yourself stoop to and come under (Gal. vi. 2), the grief which you would console, you must yourself feel with,—a law which we witness to as often as we use the words “sympathy” and “compassion,”—was truest of all in Him upon whom the help of all was laid.\* Not in this single aspect of his life, namely, that He was a healer of sicknesses, were these words of the prophet fulfilled, but rather in the life itself, which brought Him in contact with these sicknesses and these discords of man's inner being. Every one of these, as a real consequence of sin, at every moment contemplated by Him as such, did press with a living pang into the holy soul of the Lord. Not so much the healing of these sicknesses was Christ's bearing of them ; but his burden was that there were these sicknesses to heal. He “*bore*” them, inasmuch as He bore the mortal suffering life, in which alone He could bring them to an end, and finally swallow up death, and all that led to death, in victory.

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\* Hilary (in loc.): *Passione corporis sui infirmitates humanae imbecillitatis absorbens.* Schoettgen (*Hor. Heb.* in loc.) has a remarkable quotation to the same effect from the book Sohar.

## 14. THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON.

LUKE vii. 11-16.

THE “*city called Nain*” is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. It lay upon the southern border of Galilee, and on the road to Jerusalem, whither our Lord was probably now going to keep the second passover of his open ministry. Stanley points out its exact position, and even the spot where this great miracle must have been wrought: “On the northern slope of the rugged and barren ridge of Little Hermon, immediately west of Endor, which lies in a further recess of the same range, is the ruined village of *Nain*. No convent, no tradition marks the spot. But, under these circumstances, the name is sufficient to guarantee its authenticity. One entrance alone it could have had—that which opens on the rough hill-side in its downward slope to the plain. It must have been in this steep descent, as, according to Eastern custom, they ‘carried out the dead man,’ that ‘nigh to the gate’ of the village, the bier was stopped, and the long procession of mourners stayed, and ‘the young man delivered back’ to his mother.” “Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out,\* the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her.” That the Lord should thus meet the funeral at “*the gate of the city*,” while it belonged no doubt to the wonder-works of God’s grace, being one of those marvellous coincidences which, seeming accidental, are yet deep laid in the councils of his wisdom and of his love, is at the same time a natural circumstance, to be explained by the fact that the Jews did not suffer the interring of their dead in towns, but buried

\* Ἐξεκομίζετο. The technical word is ἐκφέρειν, and the carrying out, ἐκφορά.

them without the walls. There was much in the circumstances of this sad procession to arouse even their compassion who were touched with no such lively sense of human sorrows as belonged to our compassionate Lord; and it was this which had brought that "*much people*" to accompany the bier. Indeed, it would be hard to make the picture of desolation more complete, than in two strokes the Evangelist has done, whose whole narrative here, apart from its deeper interest, is a master-work for its perfect beauty. The bitterness of the mourning for an only son had passed into a proverb; thus Jer. vi. 26: "Make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation;" Zech. xii. 10: "They shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son;" and Amos viii. 10: "I will make it as the mourning of an only son." And not otherwise the desolation of a widow (Ruth i. 20, 21; 1 Tim. v. 5; Job. xxiv. 3).

*"And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not."* How different this "*Weep not,*" from the idle "*Weep not,*" which so often proceeds from the lips of earthly comforters, who, even while they speak the words, give no reason why the mourner should cease from weeping. But He who has come down from heaven that one day He may make good that word, "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*" (Rev. xxi. 4), shows now some effectual glimpses and presages of his power, wiping away, though as yet it may not be for ever, the tears from the weeping eyes of that desolate mother. Yet, as Olshausen has observed, it would be an error to suppose that compassion for the mother was the *determining* motive for this mighty spiritual act on the part of Christ: for, in that case, had the joy of the mother been the only object which He had in view, the young man who was raised would have been used merely as a *means*, which yet no man can ever be. That joy of the mother was indeed the nearest consequence of the act, but not the final

cause;—*that*, though at present hidden, was, no doubt, the spiritual awakening of the young man for a higher life, through which, indeed, alone the joy of the mother became a true and an abiding joy.

*“And He came and touched the bier”—an intimation rightly interpreted by those to whom it was addressed; “and they that bare him stood still.”* Then follows the word of power, and spoken, as ever, in his own name: “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;—I, that am the Resurrection and the Life, quickening the dead, and calling those things which be not, as though they were.” And that word was heard, for “he that was dead sat up, and began to speak.” Christ rouses from the bier as easily as another would rouse from the bed,\*—different in this even from his own messengers and ministers in the Old Covenant; for they, only with prayer and effort (1 Kin. xvii. 20-22; cf. Acts ix. 40), or after a long and patient exercise of love (2 Kin. iv. 34), won back his prey from the jaws of death; and this, because there dwelt not the *fulness* of power in them, who were but as servants in the house of another, not as a Son in his own.† So, too, in heathen legend, she was only “rescued from Death by force;” and after a fierce conflict “whom Jove’s great son to her glad husband gave.”‡

*“And He delivered him to his mother”* (cf. 1 Kin. xvii.

\* Augustine (*Serm. xcvi. 2*): Nemo tam facile excitat in lecto, quam facile Christus in sepulcro.

† See what has been said already, p. 35. Massillon, in his sermon, *Sur la Divinité de Jésus-Christ*, has these eloquent words: Elie ressuscite des morts, il est vrai; mais il est obligé de se coucher plusieurs fois sur le corps de l’enfant qu’il ressuscite: il souffle, il se rétrécit, il s’agit: on voit bien qu’il invoque une puissance étrangère: qu’il rappelle de l’empire de la mort une âme qui n’est pas soumise à sa voix: et qu’il n’est pas lui-même le maître de la mort et de la vie. Jésus-Christ ressuscite les morts comme il fait les actions les plus communes; il parle en maître à ceux qui dorment d’un sommeil éternel; et l’on sent bien qu’il est le Dieu des morts comme des vivans, jamais plus tranquille que lorsqu’il opère les plus grandes choses.

‡ See the *Alcestis* of Euripides, 849-861.

23 ; 2 Kin. iv. 36). So shall He once, when his great "Arise" shall have awakened not one, but all the dead, deliver all those that have fallen asleep in Him, to their beloved for personal recognition and for a special fellowship of joy, amid the universal gladness which shall then fill all hearts. We have the promise and pledge of this in the three raisings from the dead which prefigure that coming resurrection. "*And there came a fear on all*" (cf. Mark i. 27, v. 15 ; Luke v. 9), "*and they glorified God*" (Mark ii. 12), "*saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people.*" This could be no ordinary prophet, they concluded rightly, since none but the very greatest of the olden times, an Elijah or an Elisha, had revived the dead. They praised God, that with the raising up of so great a prophet He had brought the long and dreary period to a close, during which they had had no prophet more, till now it might have almost seemed that there should never again be any "*open vision*," that the last of the prophets had arrived.\*

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\* Philostratus (*Vita Apollonii*, iv. 45) ascribes a miracle to Apollonius, which is evidently framed in imitation and rivalry of this (on this rivalry see p. 65, and Baur, *Apollonius und Christus*, p. 40). Apollonius met one day in the streets of Rome a damsels carried out to burial, followed by her betrothed, and by a weeping company. He bade them set down the bier, saying he would stanch their tears; and having inquired her name, whispered something in her ear, and then taking her by the hand, he raised her up, and she began straightway to speak, and returned to her father's house. Yet Philostratus does not relate this as probably having been more than an awakening from the deep swoon of an apparent death (*ἀφύπνισε τὴν κόρην τοῦ δοκοῦντος θανάτου*), and suggests an explanation that reminds one of the modern ones of Paulus and his school,—that Apollonius perceived in her a spark of life which had escaped the notice of her physicians and attendants; but whether it was this, or that he did truly kindle in her anew the extinguished spark of life, he acknowledges it impossible for him, as it was for the bystanders, to say.

## 15. THE HEALING OF THE IMPOTENT MAN AT BETHESDA.

JOHN v. 1-16.

THE ablest commentator of the Romish communion begins his observations on this miracle with the expression of his hearty wish that St. John had added one word, and told us *at what "feast of the Jews"* it was wrought.\* Certainly a vast amount of learned discussion would so have been spared; for this question has been much debated, and with an interest beyond that which intrinsically belongs to it; for it affects the whole chronology of St. John's Gospel, and therefore of the ministry of our Lord; seeing that, if we cannot determine the duration of that from the helps which this Gospel supplies, we shall seek in vain to do it from the others. If this "*feast of the Jews*" was certainly a passover, then St. John will make mention of *four* passovers, three besides this present, namely, ii. 13; vi. 4; and the last; and we shall arrive at the three years and a half, the half of a "*week of years*," for the length of Christ's ministry, which many, with appearance of reason, have thought they found designated beforehand for it in the prophecies of Daniel (ix. 27).† But if this be a feast of Pentecost, or, as in later times has found acceptance with many, of Purim, then the half week of years which seems by prophecy to have been measured out for the duration of Messiah's ministry, however likely in itself, will derive no confirmation from dates supplied by St. John; nor will it be possible to make out from him, with any certainty, a period of more than be-

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\* Maldonatus, who seems almost inclined to fall out with St. John that he has not done so: *Magnâ nos Joannes molestâ contentione que liberâasset, si vel unum adjecisset verbum, quo quis ille Judæorum dies fuisset festus declarâasset.*

† See Hengstenberg, *Christologie*, 2d edit. vol. ii. p. 180.

tween two and three years from our Lord's baptism to the time when, by a better sacrifice, He caused "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." The oldest opinion which we have on this much-contested point is that of Irenæus. Replying to the Gnostics, who pressed the words of Isaiah, "the acceptable *year* of the Lord," as meaning literally that our Lord's ministry lasted but a single year, he enumerates the several passovers which He kept, and expressly includes this.\* Origen, however, and the Alexandrian doctors, who drew from Isaiah's words the same conclusions which the Gnostics had drawn, did not, as consistently they could not, agree with Irenæus; nor did the Greek Church generally; Chrysostom, Cyril, Theophylact, understanding the feast here to be Pentecost. At a later period, however, Theodoret, wishing to confirm his interpretation of the half week in Daniel, refers to St. John in proof that the Lord's ministry lasted for three years and a half,† and thus implies that for him this feast was a passover. Luther, Calvin, and the Reformers generally were of this mind; and were the question only between it and Pentecost, the point would have been settled long ago, as now on all sides the latter is given up.

But in modern times another scheme has been started,—Kepler was its first author,—which has many suffrages in its favour; to wit, that we have here a feast of Purim; that, namely, which fell just before the *second* passover in our Lord's ministry,‡ for second, and not third, would in that case be the passover which St. John presently names (John vi. 4). I am not disposed to accept this newer disposition of

\* *Con. Hær.* ii. 22: Secundâ vice ascendit in diem festum Paschæ in Hierusalem, quando paralyticum qui juxta natatorium jacebat xxxviii annos curavit.

† *Comm. in Dan.*, in loc.

‡ Hug has done everything to make it plausible; and it numbers Tholuck and Olshausen decidedly, and Lücke somewhat doubtfully, among its adherents, also Neander (*Leben Jesu*, p. 430) and Jacobi (*Theoll. Stud. u. Krit.* vol. xi. p. 861, seq.). Hengstenberg (*Christologie*, 2d ed. vol. iii. pp. 180-189) earnestly opposes it, and maintains the earlier view; so too does Paulus.

the times and seasons of our Lord's life. No doubt there is something perplexing in this passover being so soon followed by another; though, if we accept the *supplementary* character of St. John's Gospel, and that it mainly records our Lord's ministry in Judæa and Jerusalem, on which the other Evangelists had dwelt so little, this perplexity will disappear; above all, when the immediate consequences of this miracle were an impossibility to tarry there (v. 16; vi. 1). Our Translation speaks, not of "*the feast*," but "*a feast of the Jews*," and it is certainly doubtful whether the article should stand in the Greek text or no; though Tischendorf has restored it in his last edition, and it is found in that oldest of all MSS., the Codex Sinaiticus. If it should have a place here, and "*the feast*" be the proper rendering, this would be nearly decisive; for all other feasts so fall into the background for a Jew, as compared with the passover, that "*the feast*," with no further addition or qualification, could hardly mean any other feast but this (John iv. 45; Matt. xxvii. 15). Still the uncertainty of the reading will not allow too great a weight to be placed on this argument. That, however, which mainly prevails with me is this—the Evangelist clearly connects, though not in as many words, yet by pregnant juxtaposition, the Lord's going to Jerusalem with the keeping of this feast; for this He went up (cf. ii. 13). But there was nothing in the feast of Purim to draw Him thither. That was no religious feast at all; but a popular; of human, not of divine, institution. No temple service pertained to it; but men kept it at their own houses. And though naturally it would have been celebrated at Jerusalem with more pomp and circumstance than anywhere else, yet there was nothing in its feasting and its rioting, its intemperance and excess, which would have made our Lord particularly desirous to sanction it with his presence. As far as Mordecai and Esther and the deliverance wrought in their days stand below Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and the glorious redemption from Egypt, so in true worth, in dignity, in religious significance,

stood the feast of Purim below the feast of the passover; however a carnal generation may have been inclined to exaggerate the importance of that, in the past events and actual celebration of which there was so much to flatter the carnal mind. There is an extreme improbability in the hypothesis that it was this which attracted our Lord to Jerusalem; and we shall do well, I think, to stand here upon the ancient ways, and to take this feast which our Lord adorned with his presence and signalized with this great miracle, as "*the feast*," that feast which is the mother of all the rest, the passover.

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool,\* which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda,† having five porches." For many centuries the large excavation near the gate now called St. Stephen's gate, has been pointed out as the ancient Bethesda.‡ It is true that its immense depth, seventy-five feet, had perplexed many; yet the "incurious ease" which has misnamed so much in the Holy Land and in Jerusalem, had remained without being seriously challenged, until Robinson, among the many traditions which

\* Ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ should be completed, not, as in the E. V., with ἀγορᾷ, but with πύλῃ (see Neh. iii. 1; xii. 39, LXX, πύλῃ προβατικῇ), and translated, "by the sheep-gate," rather than "by the sheep-market." Κολυμβήθρα = natatoria (cf. John ix. 7), from κολυμβάω, to dive, or swim; we meet the word Eccles. ii. 6, for the reservoir of a garden. It is used in ecclesiastical language alike for the building in which baptisms are performed (the baptistery), and the font which contains the water (see Suicer, *Thes.* s. vv. βαπτιστήριον and κολυμβήθρα).

† Βηθεσδά = domus misericordiæ. Bengel and others appeal to this passage, as important for fixing the date when this Gospel was written, as proving, at least, that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet in truth it proves nothing. St. John might still have said, "There is at Jerusalem a pool," that having survived the destruction; or might have written with that vivid recollection, which caused him to speak of the past as existing yet. The various reading, ἦν for ἐστι, is to be traced to transcribers, who being rightly persuaded that this Gospel was composed after the destruction of the city, thought that St. John could not have otherwise written.

‡ Röhr, *Palestina*, p. 66, does so without a misgiving.

he has disturbed, brought this also into question, affirming that “there is not the slightest evidence which can identify it with the Bethesda of the New Testament.”\* Nor does the tradition which identifies them ascend higher, as he can discover, than the thirteenth century. He sees in that excavation the remains of the ancient fosse, which protected on the north side the citadel Antonia; and the true Bethesda he thinks he finds, though on this he speaks with hesitation, in what now goes under the name of the Fountain of the Virgin, being the upper fountain of Siloam.†

“*In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered.*” Our Version is slightly defective here. It leaves an impression that “*impotent folk*” is the genus, presently subdivided into the three species, “*blind, halt, withered;*” whereas, instead of three being thus subordinated to one, all four are coördinate with one another. We should

\* *Biblical Researches*, vol. i. p. 489, seq.

† He was himself witness of that remarkable phenomenon, so often mentioned of old, as by Jerome (*In Isai. viii.*): Siloe . . . qui non jugibus aquis, sed in certis horis diebusque ebulliat; et per terrarum concava et antra saxi durissimi cum magno sonitu veniat;—but which had of late fallen quite into discredit,—of the waters rapidly bubbling up, and rising with a gurgling sound in the basin of this fountain, and in a few minutes retreating again. When he was present they rose nearly or quite a foot (*Researches*, vol. i. pp. 506-508; for other modern testimonies to the same fact see Hengstenberg, *in loc.*). Prudentius, whom he does not quote, has anticipated the view that this Siloam is Bethesda, and that in this phenomenon is “*the troubling of the water,*” however the healing virtue may have departed.

Variis *Siloa* refundit

Momentis latices, nec fluctum semper anhelat,  
Sed vice distinctâ largos lacus accipit haustus.  
Agmina languentum sitiunt spem fontis avari,  
Membrorum maculas puro ablutura natatu;  
Certatim interea roranti pumice raucas  
Expectant scatebras, et siccō margine pendent.

Perhaps it is not a slip of memory, and a confusion of this passage with John ix. 7, but his belief in the identity of Siloam and Bethesda, which makes Irenaeus (*Con. Hær. iv. 8*) to say of our Lord: Et Siloâ etiam saepe sabbatis curavit; et propter hoc assidebant ei multi die sabbatorum.

read rather, "*In these lay a great multitude of sick, blind, halt, withered;*" the enumeration by four, when meant to be exhaustive, being a very favourite one in Scripture (Ezek. xiv. 21; Rev. vi. 8; Matt. xv. 31). The words which complete this verse, "*waiting for the moving of the water;*" lie under strong suspicion, as the verse following has undoubtedly no right to a place in the text. That fourth verse the most important Greek and Latin copies are alike without, and most of the early Versions. In other MSS. which retain this verse, the obelus which hints suspicion, or the asterisk which marks rejection, is attached to it; while those in which it appears unquestioned belong mostly, as Griesbach shows, to a later recension of the text. And this fourth verse spreads the suspicion of its own spuriousness over the last clause of the verse preceding, which, though it has not so great a body of evidence against it, has yet, in a less degree, the same notes of suspicion about it. Doubtless whatever here is addition, whether only the fourth verse, or the last clause also of the third, found very early its way into the text; we have it as early as Tertullian,—the first witness for its presence.\* The baptismal Angel, a favourite thought with him, was here foreshadowed and typified; as somewhat later, Ambrose† saw a prophecy of the descent of the Holy Ghost,

\* *De Bapt.* 5: Angelum aquis intervenire, si novum videtur, exemplum futurum præcucurrit. Piscinam Bethsaida angelus interveniens commovebat; observabant qui valetudinem querebantur. Nam si quis prævenerat descendere illuc, queri post lavacrum desinebat. Figura ista medicinæ corporalis spiritalem medicinam canebat, eâ formâ quâ semper carnalia in figurâ spiritalium antecedunt. Proficiente itaque hominibus gratiâ Dei plus aquis et angelo accessit: qui vitia corporis remedabant, nunc spiritum medentur: qui temporalem operabantur salutem, nunc æternam reformat: qui unum semel anno liberabant, nunc quotidie populos conservant. It will be observed that he calls it above, the pool *Bethsaida*; this is not by accident, for it recurs (*Adv. Jud.* 13) in Augustine, and is still in the Vulgate..

† *De Spir. Sanct.* i. 7: Quid in hoc typo Angelus nisi descensionem Sancti Spiritûs nuntiabat, quæ nostris futura temporibus, aquas sacerdotalibus invocata precibus consecraret? and *De Myst.* 4: Illis

consecrating the waters of baptism to the mystical washing away of sin ; and Chrysostom makes frequent use of the verse in this sense.\* At first probably a marginal note, expressing the popular notion of the Jewish Christians concerning the origin of the healing power which from time to time these waters possessed, by degrees it assumed the shape in which now we have it : for there are marks of growth about it, betraying themselves in a great variety of readings,—some copies omitting one part, and some another of the verse,—all which is generally the sign of a later addition : thus, little by little, it procured admission into the text, probably at Alexandria first, the birth-place of other similar additions. For the statement itself, there is nothing in it which need perplex or offend, or which might not have found place in St. John. It rests upon that religious view of the world, which in all nature sees something beyond and behind nature, which does not believe that it has discovered causes, when, in fact, it has only traced the sequence of phenomena, and which everywhere recognizes a going forth of the immediate power of God, invisible agencies of his, whether personal or otherwise, accomplishing his will.† That Angels should be the ministers

Angelus descendebat, tibi Spiritus Sanctus ; illis creatura movebatur, tibi Christus operatur ipse Dominus creaturæ.

\* Thus *In Joh. Hom. xxxvi.* : "As there it was not simply the nature of the waters which healed, for then they would have always done so, but when was added the energy of the Angel ; so with us, it is not simply the water which works, but when it has received the grace of the Spirit, then it washes away all sins."

† Hammond's explanation of this phenomenon, which reads like a leaf borrowed from Dr. Paulus, is very singular, both in itself, and as coming from him. It very early awoke earnest remonstrances on many sides,—see for instance Witsius, in Wolf, *Curae* (*in loc.*). The medicinal virtues of this pool were derived, he supposes, from the washing in it the carcasses and entrails of the beasts slain for sacrifices. In proof that they were here washed, he quotes Brocardus, a monk of the thirteenth century ! whose authority would be worth nothing, and whose words are these: *Intrantibus porro Portam Gregis ad sinistram occurrit piscina probatica, in quâ Nathinæ lavabant hostias quas tradebant sacerdotibus in Templo offerendas*; that is, as is plain, washed their fleeces before delivering them to be offered by

of his will would be only according to the analogy of other Scripture; while in “the Angel of the waters” (Rev. xvi. 5) we have a remarkable point of contact with the statement of this verse.

From among this suffering expectant multitude Christ singles out one on whom He will display his power;—one only, for He came not *now* to be the healer of men’s bodies, save only as He could annex to this healing the truer healing of their souls and spirits. “*And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*”\* Some under-

the priests. Some in later times, knowing that the sacrifices were washed *in* the temple and not without it, have amended this part of the scheme by a suggestion that the blood and other animal matter was drained off by conduits into this pool. But to proceed: The pool, he says, possessed these healing powers only at intervals, because only at the great feasts, eminently at the passover, was there slain any such multitude of beasts as could tinge and warm those waters, making them a sort of animal bath for the time. The ἄγγελος is not an Angel, but a messenger or servant, duly sent down to stir the waters, that the grosser and thicker particles, in which the chief medicinal virtue resided, but which as heaviest would have sunk to the bottom, might reinfuse themselves in the waters. The fact that only one each time was healed he explains, that probably the pool was purposely of very limited dimensions, for the concentrating of its virtues, and thus would contain no more—its strength by evaporation or otherwise being exhausted before place could be made for another. He has here worked out at length a theory which Theophylact makes mention of, although there is no appearance that he himself accepted it, as Hammond affirms. His words are: Εἶχον δὲ οἱ πολλοὶ ὑπόληψιν, ὅτι καὶ ἀπὸ μόνου τοῦ πλύνεσθαι τὰ ἐντόσθια τῶν ἱερέων δύναμιν τινὰ λαμβάνει θειότεραν τὸ ὑδωρ. And after all it seems more than doubtful whether he does not mean that some thought this grace was given to the waters *because* they were used for washing the altar sacrifices; and not that it was naturally imparted *through* that washing. Certainly what follows in his exposition seems very nearly to prove this. This explanation has found favour with one, a physician I should imagine (Richter, *De Balneo Animali*, p. 107, quoted by Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Bethesda), who writes: Non miror fontem tantā adhuc virtute animali hostiarum calentem, quippe in proxima loca tempestive effusum, ut pro pleniori partium miscelā turbatum triplici maxime infirmorum classi, quorum luculenter genus nervosum laborabat, profuisse; et quia animalis hæc virtus cito eum calore aufugit, et vappam inertem, immo putrem relinquit, iis tantum qui primi ingressi sunt, salutem attulisse.

\* These thirty and eight years of the man’s punishment answer-

stand this poor cripple—a paralytic probably (cf. ver. 8 with Mark ii. 4; Acts ix. 33, 34), to have actually waited at the edge of that pool for these “*thirty and eight years.*” Others take them for the years of his life. But neither interpretation is correct; these “*thirty and eight years*” express the duration not of his life, but of his infirmity; yet without implying that he had expected health from that pool during all that time; though the next verse informs us that he had there waited for it long. “*When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*” A superfluous question, it might seem; for who would not be made whole, if he might? and his very presence at the place of healing attested his desire. But the question has its purpose. This impotent man probably had waited so long, and so long waited in vain, that hope was dead or wellnigh dead within him, and the question is asked to awaken in him anew a yearning after the benefit, which the Saviour, pitying his hopeless case, was about to impart. His heart may have been as “*withered*” as his limbs through his long sufferings and the long neglects of his fellow-men; it was something to learn that this stranger pitied him, was interested in his case, would help him if He could. So learning to believe in his love, he was being prepared to believe also in his might. Our Lord assisted him now to the faith, which presently He was about to demand of him.

The answer, “*Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool,*” contains no direct reply, but an explanation why he had continued so long in his infirmity. The virtues of the water disappeared so fast, they were so pre-occupied, whether from the narrowness of the spot, or from some cause which we know not, by the first comer, that

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ing so exactly to the thirty-eight years of Israel’s punishment in the wilderness have not unnaturally led many, old and new (see Hengstenberg, *Christol.* vol. ii. p. 568), to find in this man a type of Israel after the flesh.

he, himself helpless, and with no man to aid, could never be this first, always therefore missed the blessing : “ *while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.*” But the long and weary years of baffled expectation are now to find an end : “ *Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*” This taking up the bed shall serve as a testimony to all of the completeness of the cure (cf. Matt. ix. 6 ; Acts ix. 34). The man believed that power accompanied that word ; made proof, and found that it was so : “ *immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked. And on the same day was the Sabbath*”—a significant addition, explaining all which follows.

“ *The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath ; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.*” By “ *the Jews*” we understand here, as always in St. John, not the multitude, but the Sanhedrists, the spiritual heads of the nation (i. 19 ; vii. 1 ; ix. 22 ; xviii. 12, 14). These find fault with the man, for had not Moses said, “ In it thou shalt not do any work” (Exod. xx. 10), and Jeremiah more pointedly still, “ Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath days” (xvii. 21) ; so that they seemed to have words of Scripture to justify their interference, and the offence which they took. But the man’s bearing of his bed was not a work by itself ; it was merely the corollary, or indeed the concluding act, of his healing, that by which he should make proof himself, and give testimony to others, of its reality. It was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day ; it was lawful then to do whatever was immediately involved in, and directly followed on, the healing. And here lay ultimately the true controversy between Christ and his adversaries, namely, whether it was more lawful to do good on that day, or to leave it undone (Luke vi. 9). Starting from the unlawfulness of leaving good undone, He asserted that He was its true keeper, keeping it as God kept it, with the highest beneficent activity, which in his Father’s case, as in his own, was identical with deepest rest,—and not, as they accused Him of being, its

breaker. It was because He had *Himself* "done those things" (see ver. 16), that the Jews persecuted Him, and not for bidding the man to bear his bed, which was a mere accident involved in his own preceding act.\* This, however, first attracted their notice. Already the pharisaical Jews, starting from passages such as Exod. xxiii. 12; xxxi. 13-17; xxxv. 2, 3; Num. xv. 32-36; Nehem. xiii. 15-22; had laid down such a multitude of prohibitions, and drawn so infinite a number of hair-splitting distinctions (as we shall have occasion to see, Luke xiii. 15, 16), that a plain and unlearned man could hardly know what was forbidden, and what was permitted. This poor man did not concern himself with these subtle casuistries. He only knew that One with power to make him whole, One who had shown compassion to him, bade him do what he was doing, and he is satisfied with this authority: "*He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk*"†—surely the very model of an answer, when the world finds fault and is scandalized with what the Christian is doing, contrary to its traditions, and to the rules which *it* has laid down!

After this greater offender they inquire now, as being the juster object of censure and of punishment: "*Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?*" The malignity of the questioners reveals itself in the very shape which their question assumes. They do not take up the poor man's words on their more favourable side, which would also have been the more natural; nor ask, "*What man is he that made thee whole?*" But, probably, themselves knowing perfectly well, or at least guessing, who his Healer was, they insinuate by the form of their question that *He* could not be from God, who gave a command

\* Calvin: Non suum modo factum excusat, sed ejus etiam qui grabbatum suum tulit. Erat enim appendix et quasi pars miraculi, quia nihil quam ejus approbatio erat.

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xvii.*): Non acciperem jussionem a quo receperam sanitatem?

which they, the interpreters of God's law, esteemed so great an outrage and transgression against it.\* So will they weaken and undermine any influence which Christ may have obtained over this simple man—an influence already manifest in his finding the Lord's authority sufficient to justify him in the transgression of their commandment.

But the man could not point out his benefactor; "*he that was healed wist not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place*"—not, as Grotius will have it, to avoid ostentation and the applauses of the people; but this mention of the multitude shall explain the facility with which He withdrew: He mingled with and passed through the crowd, and so was lost from sight in an instant. Were it not that the common people usually were on his side on occasions like the present, one might imagine that a menacing crowd under the influence of these chiefs of the Jews had gathered together, while this conversation was going forward betwixt them and the healed cripple, from whose violence the Lord, for his hour was not yet come, withdrew Himself awhile.

"*Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple.*" We may accept it as a token of good that Jesus found him there rather than in any other place. It lies near to suppose that he was there, returning thanks for the signal mercy so lately vouchsafed to him (cf. Isai. xxxviii. 22; Acts iii, 8). But He, whose purpose it ever was to connect with the healing of the body the better healing of the soul, suffers not this matter to conclude thus; but by a word of solemn warning, declares to the sufferer that all his past life lay open and manifest before Him; interprets to him the past judgment, bids him not provoke future and more terrible: "*Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" Assuredly these are words which give us an awful glimpse of the

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\* Grotius: En malitiæ ingenium! non dicunt, Quis est qui te sanavit? sed, Quis jussit grabatum tollere? Quærunt non quod inirentur, sed quod calumnientur.

severity of God's judgments even in this present time; for we must not restrict this "*worse thing*" to judgment in hell; — "*a worse thing*" than those eight and thirty years of infirmity and pain. His sickness had found him a youth, and left him an old man; it had withered up all his manhood, and yet "*a worse thing*" even than this is threatened him, should he sin again.\* Let no man, however miserable, count that he has exhausted the power of God's wrath. The arrows that have pierced him may have been keen; but, if he shall provoke them, there are sharper and keener behind.

What the past sin of this sufferer had been we know not, but the man himself knew very well; his conscience was the interpreter of the warning. This much, however, is plain to us; that Christ did connect the man's suffering with his own particular sin; for, however He rebuked elsewhere men's uncharitable way of tracing such a connexion, or that unrighteous *Theodicee*, which should in every case affirm a man's personal suffering to be in proportion to his personal guilt, a scheme which all experience refutes, much judgment being deferred to the great day; yet He never meant thereby to deny that much of judgment is even now continually proceeding. However unwilling we may be to receive this, bringing as it does God so near, and making retribution so real and so prompt a thing, yet is it true notwithstanding. As some eagle, pierced with a shaft feathered from its own wing, so many a sufferer, even in this present time, sees and cannot deny that his own sin fledged the arrow of judgment, which has pierced him and brought him down. And lest he should miss the connexion, oftentimes he is punished, it may be is himself sinned against by his fellow-man, in the very

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\* Calvin: Si nihil ferulis proficiat erga nos Deus, quibus leniter nos tanquam teneros ac delicatos filios humanissimus pater castigat, novam personam et quasi alienam induere cogitur. Flagella ergo ad domandum nostram ferociam accipit. . . . Quare non mirum est si atrocioribus poenis quasi malleis conterat Deus, quibus mediocris pena nihil prodest: frangi enim æquum est, qui corrigi non sustinent.

kind wherein he himself has sinned against others (Judg. i. 6, 7; Gen. xlvi. 21). The deceiver is deceived, as was Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 19, 24; xxix. 23; xxxi. 7; xxxvii. 32); the violator of the sanctities of family life is himself wounded and outraged in his tenderest and dearest relations, as was David (2 Sam. xi. 4; xiii. 14; xvi. 22). And many a sinner, who cannot read his own doom, for it is a final and a fatal one, yet declares in that doom to others that there is indeed a coming back upon men of their sins. The grandson of Ahab is himself treacherously slain in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite (2 Kin. ix. 23); William Rufus perishes, himself the third of his family who did so, in the New Forest, the scene of the sacrilege and the crimes of his race.\*

*"The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole."* Whom he did not recognize in the crowd, he has recognized in the temple. This is Augustine's remark, who hereupon finds occasion to commend that inner calm and solitude of spirit in which alone we shall recognize the Lord.† Yet while such remarks have their own worth, they are scarcely applicable here. The man probably learned from the bystanders the name of his deliverer, and went and told it,—assuredly not, as some assume, in treachery, or to augment the envy which was already existing against Him,—but gratefully proclaiming aloud and to the rulers of his nation the physician who had healed him.‡

\* Tragedy in its highest form continually occupies itself with this truth—nowhere, perhaps, so grandly as in the awful *reproduction* in the *Choëphore* of the scene in which Clytemnestra stood over the prostrate bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra—a reproduction *with only the difference* that now it is she and her paramour that are the slain, and her own son that stands over her.

† In Ev. Joh. tract. xvii.: Difficile est in turbâ videre Christum . . . Turba strepitum habet; visio ista secretum desiderat . . . In turbâ non eum vidit, in templo vidit.

‡ Calvin: Nihil minus in animo habuit quam conflare Christo invidiam; nihil enim minus speravit quam ut tantopere furerent adversus Christum. Pius ergo affectus fuit, quum vellet justo ac debito honore medicum suum prosequi.

He may have expected, in the simplicity of his heart, that the name of Him, whose reputation, though not his person, he had already known, whom so many counted as a prophet, if not as the Messiah Himself, would be sufficient to stop the mouths of the gainsayers. Had he wrought in a baser spirit, he would not, as Chrysostom ingeniously observes, have gone and told them "*that it was Jesus, which had made him whole,*" but rather that it was Jesus who had bidden him to carry his bed. Moreover, we may be quite sure that the Lord, who knew what was in man, would not have wasted his benefits on so mean and thankless a wretch as this man would have thus shown himself to be.

His word did not allay their displeasure, but only provoked it the more. "*And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.*" What was the penalty for the wilful violation of the Sabbath, and they who would not see in Jesus the Son of God could have only regarded Him as such a presumptuous violator of it, we see Num. xv. 32-36. He, returning good for evil, endeavoured to raise them to the true point of view from which to contemplate the Sabbath, and his relation to it as the Only-begotten of the Father. He is no more a breaker of the Sabbath than God is, when He upholds with an energy that knows no pause the work of his creation from hour to hour and from moment to moment: "*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;*" my work is but the reflex of his work. Abstinence from an outward work is not essential to the observance of a Sabbath; it is only more or less the necessary condition of this for beings so framed and constituted as ever to be in danger of losing the true collection and rest of the spirit in the multiplicity of earthly toil and business. Man indeed must cease from *his* work, if a higher work is to find place in him. He scatters himself in his work, and therefore must collect himself anew, and have seasons for so doing. But with Him who is one with the Father it is otherwise. In Him the deepest rest is not ex-

cluded by the highest activity; nay rather, in God, in the Son as in the Father, they are one and the same.\*

But so to defend what He has done only exasperates his adversaries the more. They have here not a Sabbath-breaker only, but also a blasphemer; for, however others in later times may have interpreted his words, they who first heard them interpreted them correctly;† that the Lord was here putting Himself on an equality with God, claiming divine attributes for Himself; “*Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He had not only broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making Himself equal with God.*” Strange, if the Unitarian scheme of doctrine is true, that He should have suffered them to continue in their error, that He did not at once take this stumbling-block out of their way, and explain to them that indeed He meant nothing of the kind which they supposed. But so far from this, He only reasserts what has offended them so deeply, in a discourse than which there is no weightier in Holy Scripture for the fast fixing of the doctrine concerning the relations of the Father and the Son. Other passages may be as important witnesses against the Arian, other against the Sabellian, declension from the truth; but this upon both sides plants the pillars of the faith; yet it would lead too far from the purpose of this volume to enter on it here.

I conclude with a brief reference to a matter in part anticipated already, namely, the types and prophetic symbols which many have traced in this history. Many, as has been already noticed, found in these healing influences of the pool of Bethesda a foreshowing of future benefits, above all, of the

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\* Thus Augustine on the eternal Sabbath-keeping of the faithful (*Ep. lv. 9*): *Inest autem in illâ requie non desidiosa segnitia, sed quâdam ineffabilis tranquillitas actionis otiosæ. Sic enim ab hujus vitæ operibus in fine requiescitur, ut in alterius vitæ actione gaudetur.* Cf. Philo, *Leg. All.* i. § 3.

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xvii.*): *Ecce intelligunt Judæi, quod non intelligunt Ariani.*

benefit of baptism; and, through familiarity with a miracle of a lower order, a helping of men's faith to the receiving the mystery of a yet higher healing which should be linked with water.\* They were well pleased also often to magnify the largeness and freedom of the later grace, by comparing it with the narrower and more stinted blessings of the former dispensation.† The pool with its one healed, and that one at distant intervals,—once a year Theophylact and most others assumed, although nothing of the kind is said, and the word of the original may mean oftener or seldom,—was the type of the weaker and more restrained graces of the Old Covenant; when not as yet was there room for all, nor a fountain opened, and at all times accessible, for the healing of the spiritual sicknesses of the whole race of men, but only of a single people.‡

Thus Chrysostom, in a magnificent Easter sermon,§ having its peculiar fitness, for at that season multitudes of neophytes were baptized: "Among the Jews also there was of old a pool of water. Yet learn whereunto it availed, that thou mayest accurately measure the Jewish poverty and our riches. There went down, it is said, an Angel and moved the waters, and who first descended into them after the moving, obtained a cure. The Lord of Angels went down into the stream of Jordan, and sanctifying the nature of water, healed the whole world. So that there indeed he who descended

\* So especially Chrysostom (*in loc.*).

† Tertullian (*Adv. Jud.* 13) adduces as one of the signs that even these scanty blessings did with the Jewish rejection of Christ cease altogether, that from that day forth, this pool forfeited the healing powers which it before possessed: *Lex et Prophetæ usque ad Joannem fuerunt; et piscina Bethsaïda usque ad adventum Christi, curando invalestineo ab Israel, desiit a beneficiis deinde cum ex perseverantiâ furoris sui nomen Domini per ipsos blasphemaretur.*

‡ The author of the work attributed to Ambrose (*De Sacram.* ii. 2): *Tunc inquam temporis in figurâ qui prior descendisset, solus curabatur. Quanto major est gratia Ecclesiæ, in quâ omnes salvantur, quicunque descendant!*

§ *Opp.* vol. iii. p. 756, Bened. ed.

after the first was not healed, for to the Jews, infirm and carnal, this grace was given: but here after the first a second descends, after the second a third and a fourth; and were it a thousand, didst thou cast the whole world into these spiritual fountains, the grace would not be worn out, the gift expended, the fountains defiled, the liberality exhausted." And Augustine, ever on the watch to bring out his great truth that the Law was for the revealing of sin, and could not effect its removal, for making men to know their sickness, not for the healing of that sickness, to drag them out of the lurking-places of an imagined righteousness, not to provide them of itself with any surer refuge, finds a type, or at least an apt illustration of this, in those five porches, which showed their sick, but could not cure them, in which they "*lay, a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, withered.*" It needed that the waters should be stirred, before any power went forth for their cure. This motion of the pool was the perturbation of the Jewish people at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then powers were stirring for their healing; and he who "*went down,*" he who humbly believed in his incarnation, in his descent as a man amongst us, who was not offended at his lowly estate, was healed of whatsoever disease he had.\*

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\* *Enarr. i. in Ps. lxx. 15:* Merito lex per Moysen data est, *gratia* et veritas per Jesum Christum facta est. Moyses quinque libros scripsit; sed in quinque porticibus piscinam cingentibus languidi jacebant, sed curari non poterant . . . Illis enim quinque porticibus, in figurâ quinque librorum, prodebat potius quam sanabantur ægroti . . . Venit Dominus, turbata est aqua, et crucifixus est, descendat ut sanetur ægrotus. Quid est, descendat? Humiliet se. Ergo quicumque amatis litteram sine gratiâ, in porticibus remanebitis, ægri eritis; jacentes, non convalescentes: de litterâ enim præsumitis. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps. lxxxiii. 7:* Qui non sanabatur Lege, id est porticibus, sanatur gratiâ, per passionis fidem Domini nostri Iesu Christi. *Serm. cxxv.:* Ad hoc data est Lex, quæ proderet ægrotos, non quæ tolleret. Ideo ergo ægroti illi qui in domibus suis secretius ægrotare possent, si illæ quinque porticus non essent, prodebat oculis omnium in illis porticibus, sed a porticibus non sanabantur . . . Intendite ergo. Erant illæ porticus legem significantes, portantes ægrotos non sanantes, prodentes non curantes. Cf. *In Ev. Joh. tract. xvii.*

## 16. THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND.

MATT. xiv. 15-21; MARK vi. 35-44; LUKE ix. 12-17; JOHN vi. 5-14.

THIS miracle, with the walking on the sea, which may be regarded as its appendix, is the only one which St. John has in common with the other Evangelists, and this he has in common with them all. It will follow that it is the only miracle of which a fourfold record exists. It will be my endeavour to keep all the narratives in view, as they mutually complete one another. St. Matthew connects the Lord's retirement to the desert place, on the other side of the lake,\* with the murder of John the Baptist; St. Mark and St. Luke place the two events in juxtaposition, but do not make one the motive of the other. From St. Mark, indeed, it might seem as if the Lord's immediate motive was another, namely, that the Apostles, who were just returned from their mission, might have time at once for bodily and spiritual refreshment, might not be always in a crowd, always

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\* Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 371: "The eastern shores of the lake have been so slightly visited and described, that any comparison of their features with the history must necessarily be precarious. Yet one general characteristic of that shore, as compared with the western side, has been indicated, which was probably the case in ancient times, though in a less degree than at present, namely, its desert character. Partly this arises from its nearer exposure to the Bedouin tribes; partly from its less abundance of springs and streams. There is no recess in the eastern hills, no towns along its banks corresponding to those in the Plain of Gennesareth. Thus the wilder region became a natural refuge from the active life of the western shores. It was 'when He saw great multitudes about Him' that 'He gave commandment to depart unto the other side'; and again He said, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.'"

ministering to others, never to themselves. But thither, “*into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida*,”\* the multitude followed Him, not necessarily proceeding “*afoot*,” for the  $\pi\epsilon\xi\hat{\eta}$  of St. Mark (vi. 33) need not imply this, and here does not;† but “*by land*,” as distinguished from Him, who went *by sea*. This journey they made with such expedition, that although their way was much longer about than his, who had only to cross the lake, they “*outwent*” Him, prevented his coming, so that when He “*went forth*,” not, that is, from the ship, but from his solitude, and for the purpose of graciously receiving those who thus had sought Him out, He “*saw much people*” waiting for Him. This their presence entirely defeated the very intention for which He had sought that solitude; yet He not the less “*received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing*.” St. John’s apparently casual notice of the fact that the passover was at hand, is not so much to fix a point in the chronology of the Lord’s ministry, as to explain from whence these great multitudes, that streamed to Jesus, came; they were on their road to Jerusalem, there to keep the feast.

The way is prepared for the miracle in a somewhat different manner by the three earlier Evangelists, and by St. John. According to them, “*When it was evening his dis-*

\* Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 374: “‘Bethsaida’ is the eastern city of that name, which, from the importance of the new city Julias, built there by Philip the Tetrarch [see Josephus, *B. J.* iii. 9, 1; *Antiq.* xviii. 2, 1; and cf. Pliny, *H. N.* v. 15], would give its name to the surrounding desert tract. The ‘desert place’ was either one of the green tablelands visible from the hills on the western side, or more probably part of the rich plain at the mouth of the Jordan. In the parts of this plain not cultivated by the hand of man would be found the ‘much green grass,’ still fresh in the spring of the year when this event occurred, before it had faded away in the summer sun,—the tall grass, which, broken down by the feet of the thousands there gathered together, would make as it were ‘couches’ ( $\kappaλυσίας$ ) for them to recline upon.” This Bethsaida must be carefully distinguished from “Bethsaida of Galilee” (John xii. 21; Matt. xi. 21; John i. 45).

† Herodotus, vii. 110; Plato, *Menex.* 239 E.

*ciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves meat.*" The first suggestion comes here from the disciples; while in St. John it is the Lord Himself who, in his question to Philip, "*Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?*" (vi. 5) first contemplates the difficulty. This difference, however, is capable of an easy explanation. Our Lord may have put this question to Philip at a somewhat earlier period of the afternoon; then left the difficulty which He had moved to work in the minds of the Apostles; bringing them, as was so often his manner, to see that there was no help in the common course of things; and when they had acknowledged this, then, and not before, stepping in with his higher aid.\*

St. John, who is ever careful to avert a misconstruction from the words of his Lord (ii. 21; xxi. 22), above all, any which might seem to derogate from his perfect wisdom or love, does not fail to inform us, that He asked this, not as needing any counsel, not as being Himself in any real embarrassment, "*for He Himself knew what He would do,*" but "*tempting him,*" as Wiclif's translation has it,—which word if we admit, we must yet understand in its milder sense, as indeed our Version has done, which has given it, "*to prove him*"† (cf. Gen. xxii. 1). It was "*to prove him,*" and what measure of faith he had in that Master, whom he had himself already acknowledged the Messiah, "*Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets did write*" (John i.-45). It should now be seen whether Philip, calling to mind the great things which Moses had done, who gave the people bread from heaven in the wilderness, and the notable miracle

\* For the reconciliation of any apparent contradiction, see Augustine, *De Cons. Evang.* ii. 46.

† Πειράζων αὐτόν. Cf. Augustine (*De Serm. Dom. in Mon.* ii. 9): *Illud factum est, ut ipse sibi notus fieret qui tentabatur, suamque desperationem condemnaret, saturatis turbis de pane Domini, qui eas non habere quod ederent existimaverat.*

which Elisha, though on a smaller scale than that which now was needed, had performed (2 Kin. iv. 43, 44), could so lift up his thoughts as to believe that He whom he had recognized as the Christ, greater therefore than Moses or the prophets, would be equal to the present need. Cyril sees a reason why to Philip, rather than to any other Apostle, this question should have been put, namely that his need of the teaching contained in it was the greatest; and refers to his later words, “Lord, show us the Father” (John xiv. 8), in proof of the tardiness of his spiritual apprehension.\* But whatever the motive which led to the singling of him out for proof, he does not abide that proof. Long as he has been with Jesus, he has not yet seen the Father in the Son (John xiv. 9); as yet he knows not that the Lord whom he serves is even the same who “openeth his hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness,” who feeds and nourishes all creatures, who has fed and nourished them from the creation of the world, and who therefore can feed these few thousands that are this day more particularly dependent on his bounty. He can conceive of no other supplies save such as natural means could procure, and at once comes to the point: “*Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*” The sum he names, he would of course imply, was much larger than the common purse could yield.

Having drawn this confession of inability to meet the present need from the lips of Philip, He left it to work;—till, somewhat later in the day, the disciples came with their proposal. But the Lord will now bring them yet nearer to the end at which He aims, and replies, “*They need not depart; give ye them to eat:*” and when they repeat with one mouth what Philip had before affirmed, asking if they shall spend two hundred pence† (for them an impossible outlay) in

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\* Cramer, *Catena* (in loc.).

† The specifying of this sum as inadequate to the present need

making the necessary provision, "*He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see.*" With their question we may compare that of Moses: "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them?" (Num. xi. 22. cf. Ps. lxxviii. 19, 20), for there is the same mitigated infidelity in both; the same doubt whether the power of the Lord is equal to that which his word, openly or implicitly, has undertaken. In the interval between their going and their return to Him, they purchase, or rather secure for purchase, the little stock which a single lad among the multitude has to sell; so we may explain that in the earlier Evangelists they speak of the five loaves and two fishes\* as theirs, in St. John as still belonging to the lad himself.†

With this slender stock of homeliest fare, for St. John informs us that the loaves were "*barley loaves*" (cf. 2 Kin. vii. 1; Judg. vii. 13; Ezek. iv. 12), the Lord undertakes to satisfy all that multitude (Chrysostom quotes aptly here Ps. lxxviii. 19: "Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness?"); "*for He commanded them to make all sit down by companies on the green grass,*" at that early spring season a delightful resting-place.‡ The mention of this "*green grass,*" or "*much grass,*" is another point of contact between St. Mark and St.

is peculiar to St. Mark and St. John: another proof that St. Mark's Gospel is something else than an epitome now of St. Matthew's, now of St. Luke's. It is clear he had resources quite independent of theirs.

\* Instead of *ἰχθύες*, St. John has *ὅψαρτα*, both here and xxi. 9. This word, the diminutive of *ὅψον* (from *ἔψω*, to prepare by fire), properly means any *προσφάγιον* or pulmentum, anything, as flesh, salt, olives, butter, &c. which should be eaten as a relish with bread. But by degrees, as Plutarch (*Symp.* iv. 4) remarks, *ὅψον* and *ὅψαριον* came in men's language to be restricted with a narrower use to fish alone, generally salt fish, that being the favourite or most usual accompaniment of bread (see Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. *ὅψαριον*, the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. *Opsonium*, and Becker, *Charikles*, vol. i. p. 433).

† Grotius: *Apud alios Evangelistas dicuntur habere id quod in promptu erat, ut emi posset.*

‡ . . . . . prostrati gramine molli,  
Præsertim cum tempestas arridet, et anni  
Tempora conspergunt viridantes floribus herbas.

John. The former adds another graphic touch, how they sat down in companies, “*by hundreds and by fifties*,” and how these separate groups showed in their symmetrical arrangement like so many garden-plots.\* It was a prudent precaution. The vast assemblage was thus subdivided and broken up into manageable portions; there was less danger of tumult and confusion, or that the weaker, the women and the children, should be past over, while the stronger and ruder unduly put themselves forward; the Apostles were able to pass easily up and down along the ranks, and to minister in orderly succession to the necessities of all.

The taking of the bread in hand would seem to have been a formal act which went before the blessing or giving of thanks for it† (Luke xxiv. 30; 1 Cor. xi. 23). This eucharistic act Jesus accomplished as the head of the household, and according to that beautiful saying of the Talmud, “He that enjoys aught without thanksgiving, is as though he robbed God.” Having blessed, He “*brake and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude*;”—the marvellous multiplication taking place, as many affirm, first in the Saviour’s own hands, next in those of the Apos-

\* Πρασιά, πρασιά — areolatiim, as in square garden-plots. Theophylact: Πρασιά γάρ λέγονται τὰ ἐν τοῖς κήποις διάφορα κόμματα, ἐν οἷς φυτεύονται διάφορα πολλάκις λάχανα. Some derive it from πέρας, these patches being commonly on the edges of the vineyard or garden; others from πράσον, porrum, the onion being largely grown in them. Our English “*in ranks*” does not reproduce the picture to the eye, giving rather the notion of continuous lines; Wiclif’s “*by parties*” was better. Perhaps “*in groups*” would be as near as we could get to it in English.

† In Matthew and Mark, εὐλόγησε,—in Luke, εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς, sc. τοὺς ἄρτους,—in John, καὶ εὐχαριστήσας, which word on occasion of the second multiplying of the bread both Matthew (xv. 36) and Mark (viii. 6) use. The terms are synonymous: cf. Matt. xxvi. 27, with the parallels, 1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 24; and see Grotius on Matt. xxvi. 26. Origen’s view that our Lord wrought the wonder τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τῇ εὐλογίᾳ, that this moment of taking the loaves into his hand and blessing, was the wonder-crisis, is sustained by the fact that all four Evangelists bring out the circumstance of the blessing, and most of all by St. Luke’s words, εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς: cf. John vi. 28.

ties, and lastly in the hands of the eaters. This may have been so; at all events it was in such a manner that "*they did all eat and were filled*"\* (Psal. cxlv. 16). There was now fulfilled for that multitude the pledge and the promise of the Saviour, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." They had come taking no thought, for three days at least, of what they should eat or what they should drink, only desirous to hear the word of life, only seeking the kingdom of heaven; and now the lower things, according to the word of the promise, were added unto them.

Here too, even more remarkably than with the water changed into wine, when we endeavour to realize to ourselves *the manner* of the miracle, it evermore eludes our grasp. We seek in vain to follow it with our imaginations. For, indeed, how is it possible to realize to ourselves, to bring within forms of our conception, any act of creation, any *becoming*? how is it possible in our thoughts to bridge over the gulf between not-being and being, which yet is bridged over in every creative act? And this being impossible, there is no force in the objection which one has made against the historical truth of this narrative, namely, that "there is no attempt by closer description to make clear in its details the manner and process in which this wonderful bread was formed." It is true wisdom, to leave the description of the indescribable unattempted.† They who bear record of these things appeal to the same faith which believes "that the worlds were

\* *Xopráζeοrθai*, properly, to *fodder* cattle, was transferred by writers of the later Comedy to the *feeding* of men; see examples in Athenaeus (*Deipnos*. iii. 56), where one justifies himself for using *χορτασθῆναι* as = *κορεσθῆναι* (cf. Sturz, *De Dial. Maced.* pp. 200-202).

† Thus Hilary (*De Trin.* iii. § 6): *Fallunt momenta visum, dum plenam fragmentis manum sequeris, alteram sine damno portionis suæ contueris . . . Non sensus non visus profectum tam inconspicabilis operationis assequitur. Est, quod non erat; videtur quod non intelligitur; solum superstes ut Deus omnia posse credatur.* Cf. Ambrose, *Exp. in Luc. vi. 85.*

framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3).

An analogy has been found to this miracle, a certain help to its understanding, in that which year by year is accomplished in the field, where a single grain of corn multiplies itself, and in the end unfolds in numerous ears;—and, having this analogy in view, many beautiful remarks have been made; as this, that while God's every-day miracles had grown cheap in men's sight by continual repetition, He had therefore reserved something, not more wonderful, but less frequent, to arouse men's minds to a new admiration. Others have urged that here, as in the case of the water made wine, He did but compress into a single moment all those processes which in ordinary circumstances He, the same Lord of nature, causes more slowly to succeed one another.\* But, true as in its measure is this last observation, it must not be forgotten that the analogy does not reach through and through. For that other work in the field is the unfolding of the seed according to the law of its own being: thus, had the Lord taken a few grains of corn and cast them into the ground, and, if a moment after, a large harvest had sprung up, to this the name of such a "divinely-hastened process" might

\* Augustine (*Serm. cxxx. 1*): Grande miraculum: sed non multum mirabimur factum, si attendamus facientem. Illa multiplicavit in manibus frangentium quinque panes, qui in terrâ germinantia multiplicat semina, ut grana pauca mittantur, et horrea repleantur. Sed quia illud omni anno facit, nemo miratur. Admirationem tollit non facti vilitas sed assiduitas. And again (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xxiv.*): Quia enim . . . miracula ejus, quibus totum mundum regit, universamque creaturam administrat assiduitate viluerunt, ita ut pene nemo dignetur attendere opera Dei mira et stupenda in quolibet seminis grano; secundum ipsam suam misericordiam servavit sibi quædam quæ ficeret opportuno tempore præter usitatum cursum ordinemque naturæ, ut non majora sed insolita videndo stuperent, quibus quotidiana viluerant . . . Illud mirantur homines, non quia majus est, sed quia rarum est. Quis enim et nunc pascit universum mundum, nisi ille qui de paucis granis segetes creat? Fecit ergo quomodo Deus. Unde enim multiplicat de paucis granis segetes, inde in manibus suis multiplicavit quinque panes. Potestas enim erat in manibus Christi. Panes autem illi quinque quasi semina erant, non

have been fitly applied.\* But with bread it is otherwise; since, before that is made, there must be new interpositions of man's art, and those of such a nature as that by them the very life, which hitherto unfolded itself, must be crushed and destroyed. A grain of wheat could never by itself, and according to the laws of its natural development, issue in a loaf of bread. And, moreover, the Lord does not start from the simple germ, from the lifeful rudiments, in which all the seeds of a future life might be supposed to be wrapt up, and by Him rapidly developed, but with the latest artificial result: one can conceive how the oak is enfolded in the acorn, but not how it could be said to be wrapped up in the piece of timber hewn and shaped from itself. This analogy then, even as such, is not satisfying; and, renouncing all helps of this kind,† we must simply behold in this multiplying of the

quidem terræ mandata, sed ab eo qui terram fecit, multiplicata. And again, *Serm. cxxvi. 3*: Quotidiana miracula Dei non facilitate sed assiduitate viluerant. . . . Mirati sunt homines, Dominum Deum nostrum Jesum Christum de quinque panibus saginasse tot millia, et non mirautur per pauca grana impleri segetibus terras . . . Quia tibi ista viluerant, venit ipse ad facienda insolita, ut et in ipsis solitis agnoscereis Artificem tuum. Cf. *Serm. eexlvii.*

\* In the apocryphal *Evangelium S. Thomæ* such a miracle is ascribed to the child Jesus; the miraculous, however, not consisting in the swiftness, but the largeness, of the return. He goes out at sowing time with Joseph into the field, and sows there a single grain of wheat; from this He has the return of a hundred *cors*, which He distributes to the poor (Thilo, *Cod. Apocryphus*, p. 302).

† The attempt to find in the natural world analogies, nearer or more remote, for the miracles may spring from two, and those very opposite, sources. It may be that men are endeavouring herein to realize to themselves, so far as this is allowed them, the course of the miracle, and by the help of workings not wholly dissimilar, to bring it vividly before the eye of their mind,—delighted in thus finding traces of one and the same God in the lower world and the higher, and in marking how the natural and supernatural are concentric circles, though one wider than and containing the other; as when in animal magnetism analogies have been found to the healing power which streamed forth from Christ, and this even by some who have kept this obscure and perilous power of our lower nature altogether distinct from that pure element of light and life, which went forth and was diffused from Him. But these analogies may be sought out and welcomed in a very different spirit, in the hope, by the aid of

bread an act of divine omnipotence\* on his part who was the Word of God,—not indeed now, as at the first, of absolute creation out of nothing, since there was a substratum to work on in the original loaves and fishes, but an act of creative accretion; a *quantitative*, as the water turned into wine was a *qualitative*, miracle, the bread *growing* under his hands, so that from that little stock all the multitude were abundantly supplied: “*they did all eat, and were filled.*”

Thus He, all whose works were “signs,” and had a tongue by which they spoke to the world, did in this miracle proclaim Himself the true bread of the world, that should satisfy the hunger of men, the inexhausted and inexhaustible source of all life, in whom there should be enough and to spare for all the spiritual needs of all hungering souls in all ages.† For, in Augustine’s language, once already quoted, “He was the Word of God; and all the acts of the Word are themselves words for us; they are not as pictures, merely to look at and admire, but as letters, which we must seek to read and understand.”‡

When all had eaten and were satisfied, the disciples gather up the fragments which remained over of the loaves, that nothing might be lost; only St. John mentions that it is at Christ’s bidding they do this; the existence of these itself

these, of escaping from the miraculous in the miracle altogether; as when some have eagerly snatched at these same facts of animal magnetism, not as lower and remote analogies, but as identical, or well-nigh identical, facts with the miraculous healings of our Lord.

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh.* tract. ix.): Omnipotentia Domini quasi fons panis erat; and again (*Enarr. ii. in Ps. ex. 10*): Fontes panis erant in manibus Domini.

† Thus Prudentius:

Tu cibus panisque noster, tu perennis suavitas;  
Nescit esurire in ævum qui tuam sumit dapem,  
Nec lacunam ventris implet, sed fovet vitalia.

‡ Verbum Dei est Christus, qui non solum sonis sed etiam factis loquitur hominibus; cf. *In Ev. Joh.* tract. xxiv.: Interrogemus ipsa miracula quid nobis loquuntur de Christo; habent enim, si intelligantur, linguam suam.

witnessing that there was enough for all and to spare (2 Kin. iv. 43, 44; Ruth ii. 14). For thus, as Olshausen remarks, with the Lord of nature, as with nature herself, the most prodigal bounty goes hand in hand with the nicest and exactest economy; and He who had but now shown Himself God, again submits Himself to the laws and proprieties of his earthly condition, so that, as in the miracle itself his power, in this command his humility, shines eminently forth. "*And they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full*"—for each Apostle his basket. St. Mark mentions that it was so done in like manner with the fishes. This which remained over must have immensely exceeded in bulk and quantity the original stock; so that we have here a visible symbol of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but after all its outgoings upon others, abides itself far richer than it would have done but for these, of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing; of the increasing which may go along with a scattering (Prov. xi. 24; cf. 2 Kin. iv. 1-7).

St. John,—always careful to note whatever actively stirred up the malignity of Christ's enemies,—to which nothing more contributed than the expression of the people's favour, all which thus drew on the final catastrophe,—alone tells us of the effect which this miracle had upon the multitude; how "*they that had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth the prophet that should come into the world,*" the prophet of whom Moses spake, like to himself, whom God would raise up (Deut. xviii. 15); and, ever eager for new things, they would fain, with or without his consent, have made Him their king; and, as St. John's word may perhaps imply (*ἀρπάζειν*), being on their way to Jerusalem, would have borne Him with them thither, to instal Him there in the royal seat of David. It was not merely the power which He here displayed that moved them so mightily, but the fact that a miracle exactly of this character was looked for from the Messiah. He was to repeat, so to say, the miracles of Moses. As Moses, the

first redeemer, had given bread of wonder to the people in the wilderness, even so should the later Redeemer do the same.\* Thus too, when the first enthusiasm which this work had stirred was spent, the Jews compare it with that which Moses had done, not any longer to find here a proof that as great or a greater prophet was among them, but invidiously to depress the present by comparison with the past miracle; and by the inferiority which they found in this, to prove that Jesus was not that Messias who had a right to rebuke and command them. “What sign shovest Thou, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost *Thou* work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from *heaven* to eat” (John vi. 30, 31); “while the bread which Thou hast given,” for this much they would imply, “is but this common bread of earth, with which Thou hast once nourished a few thousands.”†

But although there is a resemblance between that miracle and this, the resemblance is more striking between this and another in the O. T., already referred to,—that which Elisha wrought, when with the twenty loaves of barley he satisfied a hundred men (2 Kin. iv. 42-44). All the *rudiments* of this miracle there appear;‡ the two substances, one artificial, one

\* Schoettgen (*Hor. Heb.* in loc., from the *Midrasch Coheleth*): Quemadmodum Goël primus, sic quoque erit postremus. Goël primus descendere fecit Man, q. d. Exod. xvi. 4, Et pluere faciam vobis panem de caelo. Sic quoque Goël postremus descendere facit Man, q. d. Ps. lxxii. 16, Erit multitudo frumenti super terram.

† Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 21): Non uno die, sed annis quadraginta, nee de inferioribus materiis panis et piscis, sed de manna cœlesti, nec quinque circiter sed sexcenta millis hominum protelavit.

‡ Tertullian notes this prefiguration of the miracles of Christ in those of his servants, against the Gnostics, who would fain have cut loose the New T. from the Old, and found not merely distinction, but direct opposition, between them (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 21): Invenies totum hunc ordinem Christi circa illum Dei hominem, qui oblatos sibi viginti hordeaceos panes cum populo distribui jussisset, et minister ejus proinde comparata multitudine et pabuli mediocritate, respondisset, Quid ergo hoc dem in conspectu centum hominum? Da, inquit, et manducabant . . . O Christum et in novis veterem! Haec itaque quæ viderat, Petrus, et cum pristinis comparat, et non tantum retro

natural, from which the many persons are fed, as here bread and fish, so there bread and fresh ears of corn. As here the disciples are incredulous, so there the servitor asks, "Should I set this before a hundred men?" As here twelve baskets of fragments remain, so there "they did eat, and left thereof." Yet were they only the weaker rudiments of this miracle; a circumstance which the difference between the servants and the Lord sufficiently explains. The prophets having grace only in measure, so in measure they wrought their miracles; but the Son, working with infinite power, and with power not lent Him, but his own, did all with much superabundance. Analogies to this miracle, but of a remoter kind, are to be found in the multiplying of the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal by Elijah (1 Kin. xvii. 16), and in that other miracle of the oil, which, according to the prophet's word, continued to flow so long as there were vessels to receive it (2 Kin. iv. 1-7).\*

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facta, sed et in futurum jam tunc prophetantia recognoverat, interroganti Domino, quisnam illis videretur, cum pro omnibus responderet, Tu es Christus, non potest non eum sensisse Christum, nisi quem noverat in scripturis, quem jam recensebat in factis.

\* I have promised, p. 81, a specimen or two of the rationalist explanations of the miracles. It were thrice to slay the slain to enter at the present time on a serious refutation of them; new forms of opposition to the truth have risen up, but this has gone by; yet as curiosities of interpretation, they may deserve a passing notice. This then is the scheme of Paulus for a natural explanation of the present miracle. He assumes that, though many of the multitude had nothing to eat, there were others who had some stock and store by them; which was the more probable on the present occasion, as we know that the Jews, when travelling to any distance, used to carry their provisions with them,—and of this multitude many were thus coming from far to the passover at Jerusalem. These stores they had hitherto withheld from the common needs; but now, put to shame by the free liberality of Jesus, they brought forth and distributed, He having first led the way, and freely imparted the little stock at his own command. Many difficulties certainly seem to stand in the way of this,—that is, of the Evangelists having actually meant to relate this; for Paulus does not say that they made a mistake, and exalted an ordinary event into a miracle, but that this is what they actually intended to relate. It is, for example, plainly a difficulty that, even supposing the people to have followed "the example of

laudable moderation" which Jesus showed them, there should have remained twelve baskets of fragments from his five loaves. But to this Paulus replies that they indeed affirm nothing of the kind; that St. John, so far from asserting this (ver. 13), is rather accounting for the fact that there should be any residue whatsoever, explaining why the Lord should have had need (ver. 12) to bid gather up a remnant at all, from the circumstance that the Apostles had set before the people so large a supply that there was more than enough for all;—and it is exactly, he says, this which ver. 13 affirms, which verse he thus explains: "For they got together (*συνήγαγον οὖν*) and had filled (*ἔγέμισαν*, an aor. 1 for plusq. perf.) twelve baskets with fragments (*i. e.* with bread broken and prepared for eating) of the five loaves, which were more than enough (*ἀ ἐπερίσσευσε*) for the eaters;"—so that St. John is speaking, not of remnants *after* the meal, but of bread broken *before* the meal. That this should be called presently after a *σημεῖον* (ver. 14) does but mean a *sign* of his humanity and wisdom, by which He made a little to go so far. But this may suffice.

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## 17. THE WALKING ON THE SEA.

MATT. xiv. 22-33; MARK vi. 45-52; JOHN vi. 14-21.

THE three Evangelists who narrate this miracle alike place it in immediate sequence to the feeding of the five thousand, and on the evening of the same day. The two first relate, that when all were fed, and the Lord was now about to dismiss the multitude, "*straightway He constrained his disciples to get into the ship.*" Why He should have found it necessary to "*constrain*' them, they do not say. Some vaguely suggest a general unwillingness on the part of the disciples to be separated, even for a season, from their beloved Lord.\* But the true key to the phrase is obtained, when we compare the parallel record of St. John. There we learn that the multitude desired to take Jesus by force and make Him a king; and that He only avoided this, by departing into a mountain Himself alone. The disciples could not have helped being aware of the shape which the popular enthusiasm was taking; and this was exactly to their mind; this was precisely what they had long hoped would arrive, so that they must have been most reluctant to quit their Master at the moment of his approaching exaltation. Thus, however, it must be, and while He dismisses the people, they must "*go to the other side before unto Bethsaida.*" There is no contradiction here between St. Mark's "*Bethsaida,*" and St. John's statement that they "*went over the sea towards Capernaum;*" since this Bethsaida, not identical with that just before mentioned by St. Luke (ix. 10), and for distinction called Bethsaida Julias, but the city of Philip and Andrew and Peter (John i. 44), lay on the western side of the

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\* As Jerome, and Chrysostom: Τὸ δὴνάγκασεν δὲ εἶπεν, τὴν πολλὴν προσεδρίαν δεικνὺς τῶν μαθητῶν.

lake, in the same direction as, and near to, Capernaum. St. Matthew, and St. Mark with him, makes two evenings to this day,—one which had already commenced before the preparations for the feeding of the multitude had begun (ver. 15), the other, now when the disciples had entered into the ship, and commenced their voyage (ver. 23). And this was an ordinary way of speaking among the Jews, the first evening being very much our afternoon (see Luke ix. 12, where the “*evening*” of Matthew and Mark is described as the season “*when the day began to wear away*”); the second evening\* being the twilight, or from six o’clock to twilight; on which absolute darkness followed. It was the first evening, or afternoon, when the preparations for feeding the five thousand commenced; the second, when the disciples took ship.

“*And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when even was come, He was there alone.*” From thence, with the watchful eye of love, “*He saw them toiling in rowing*” (cf. Exod. iii. 7; Ps. lvi. 8); for in their Lord’s absence they were able to make no effectual progress: “*the wind was contrary*,” and the sea rough: their sails, of course, could profit them nothing. It was now “*the fourth watch of the night*,” near morning therefore, and notwithstanding all their efforts they had not accomplished more than “*five and twenty or thirty furlongs*,” scarcely, that is, more than half of their way, the lake being forty or forty-five furlongs in breadth. Probably they were ever finding themselves more unable to proceed, the danger probably was ever increasing, when suddenly they see their Lord “*walking on the sea*,”† and already close to their bark.

\* Ὀψία δευτέρα.

† Many have supposed that Lucian (*Ver. Hist.* ii. 4), in his account of the cork-footed race ( $\phi\epsilon\lambda\acute{o}\pi\delta\epsilon\varsigma$ ), whom in his voyage he past  $\epsilon\pi\imath\tau\omega\bar{\imath}$  πελάγους διαθέοντας, intended a scoff against this miracle. I doubt whether so expert a scoffer, if he had meant this, would not have done it better; still the hint which he gives (l. 2), that something lies under these absurd and extravagant travellers’ tales which he has strung together, that they contain every one allusions to the

It was his purpose in all the events of this night, as Chrysostom well brings out, to train his disciples to higher things than hitherto they had learned. That first storm (Matt. viii. 24) was by day, this was by night. Then He was present in the ship with them; if it came to the worst, they knew that they might rouse Him; while the mere sense of his presence must have given them the sense of a comparative security. But they must learn to walk by faith and not by sight; He will not have them as the ivy, needing always an outward support, but as hardy forest-trees, which can brave a blast; and this time He puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest, that they may find their own wings and learn to use them. And the happy issue of all shall awaken in them an abiding confidence in his ever-ready help; for as his walking on the sea must have been altogether unimagined and unimaginable by them, they may have easily despaired of that help reaching them; but He, when He has tried them to the uttermost, "*in the fourth watch of the night,*" appears beside

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fables and portents of poets and historians and *philosophers*, makes it not altogether improbable; and in the *Philopseudes*, where there seem to me far more evident side-glances at the miracles of the Gospel,—as for instance, a miraculously-healed man taking up his bed (11), the expulsion of the evil spirit from a demoniac (16), reminding one singularly of that recorded Mark ix. 14-29; this also of walking on the water recurs (13), among the incredible things proposed for the wise man's belief. The Golden City of the Blest, with its diamond walls, its floors of ivory, and its vines bearing fruit every month (*Ver. Hist. ii. 11-13*), may very well be written in rivalry and in ridicule of the description of the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 19; xxii. 2; as the story of the great multitude of men comfortably housed for some years in the belly of a whale (*Ib. i. 30-42*) may be intended to be an outdoing of the history of Jonah and his three days' abode in a like place. This we know was an especial object of the flouts of the heathen; see Augustine, *Ep. cii. qu. 6*; and Josephus (*Annt. ix. 10, § 2*), aiming to make his works acceptable to the educated heathen, gets over it with a λόγος—"as some say." On the point of view under which Lucian contemplated Christianity there is an Essay by Krebs, *De Malitioso Luciani Consilio, &c.* in his *Opusc. Acad.* p. 308; and see Tzschrirner, *Fall des Heidenthums*, p. 320; and the *Theoll. Studien u. Kritiken*, 1851, pp. 826-902.

them; thus teaching them for all their after life, in all coming storms of temptation, that He is near them; that however He may not be seen always by their bodily eyes, however they may appear cut off from his assistance, yet is He indeed a very present help in the needful time of trouble.

Nor ought we, I think, to fail to recognize the symbolic character which this whole transaction wears. As that bark upon those stormy billows, such is oftentimes the Church, tossed to and fro on the waves of the troublesome world. It seems as though it had not its Lord with it, such little way does it make; so baffled is it and tormented by opposing winds and waves. But his eye is on it still; He is in the mountain apart praying; ever living, an ascended Saviour, to make intercession for his people. And when at length the extremity of the need has arrived, He is suddenly with it, and that in marvellous ways past finding out; and then all that before was so laborious is easy, and the toiling rowers are anon at the haven where they would be.\*

*“And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; † and they cried out for fear.”* It is often so. Let Him only come to his people in some unwonted manner, as He has not been used to come in time past, in the shape of some affliction, in the way of some

\* Thus Bede: *Labor discipulorum in remigando et contrarius eis ventus labores sanctæ Ecclesiæ varios designat, quæ inter undas seculi adversantis et immundorum flatus spirituum ad quietem patriæ cœlestis, quasi ad fidam litoris stationem, pervenire conatur.* Ubi bene dicitur, quia navis erat in medio mari et ipse solus in terrâ; quia nonnunquam Ecclesia tantis Gentilium pressuris non solum afficta, sed et fœdata est, ut, si fieri posset, Redemptor ipsius eam prorsus deseruisse ad tempus videretur. . . . Videt [tamen] Dominus laborantes in mari, quamvis ipse positus in terrâ; quia etsi ad horam differre videatur auxilium tribulatis impendere, nihilominus eos, ne in tribulationibus deficiant, suæ respectu pietatis corroboiat, et aliquando etiam manifesto adjutorio, victis adversitatibus, quasi calcatis sedatisque fluctuum voluminibus, liberat. Cf. Augustine, *Serm. lxxv.* So too Anselm (*Hom. iii.*): *Nam quia insurgunt fluctus, potest ista navicula turbari, sed quia Christus orat, non potest mergi.*

† Φάντασμα=φάσμα νυκτερινόν (Job xx. 8).

cross, and they know Him not. Their Lord, and charged with blessings for them, He yet seems to them as some terrible phantom of the night. They too cry out for fear. The disciples perhaps on this occasion might have pleaded that there was that in his approach to their bark, which would not allow them to recognize Him for what He was. He "*would have passed them by.*"\* How could they suppose that this was their Lord, hastening to the help of his own? The circumstance perplexed *them* for a moment; it has perplexed others lastingly. Those who are on the watch to discover inner inconsistencies in the Gospels have asked, "Why appear to pass them by and to escape them, when the only aim of his coming was to re-assure and to aid them? when He so little really meant to do this, that no sooner was He recognized and detained by their cries, than He ascended into the ship where they were?" Doubtless this, as each other dealing of God with his people, is hard to be understood of those to whom the entire life of faith is altogether strange. He will seem to pass them by, seem to forsake them, so evoking their prayer and their cry, that He would *not* pass them by, that He would *not* forsake them.† Not otherwise, walking with his two disciples to Emmaus, after his resurrection, "He made as though He would have gone further" (Luke xxiv. 28), thus drawing out from them the entreaty that He would abide. It is evermore thus; we have here no exceptional dealing, but one finding its analogies everywhere in the Scripture and in the Christian life. What part does Christ

\* Calvin: Pii audito ejus nomine, quod illis est certum et divini amoris et suæ salutis pignus, quasi a morte in vitam excitati animos colligunt, et quasi sereum cœlum hilares conspiciunt, quieti in terrâ resident, et omnium malorum victores ejus præsidium omnibus periculis opponunt.

† Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 47): Quomodo ergo eos volebat præterire, quos paventes ita confirmat, nisi quia illa voluntas prætereundi ad eliciendum illum clamorem valebat, cui subveniri oportebat? Corn. a Lapide: Volebat præterire eos, quasi eos non curans, nec ad eos pertinens, sed alio pergens, ut in eis metum et clamorem excitaret.

sustain here different from that which in the parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke xviii. 2), or the churlish Friend (Luke xi. 5), He ascribes to God? or different from that which He Himself sustained when He came not to the help of the sisters of Bethany in what seemed the utmost extremity of their need (John xi. 6)? And are not all the complaints of the faithful in the Psalms, that God hides his face, that He gives them into the hands of their enemies, that He is absent from them so long, confessions that He does so deal with his servants, that by delaying and seeming to pass them by, He quickens their faith, and calls out their prayers that He would come to them soon, and abide with them always?

And now, as one by that cry of distress detained and arrested, He at once scatters and rebukes their fears: "*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*" Whereupon follows that characteristic rejoinder of Peter, which, with its consequences, St. Matthew alone records: "*Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.*" That "*if*" must not be interpreted as implying a doubt whether it was the Lord or not. A Thomas, indeed, may have required to have Jesus with him in the ship, ere he would fully believe that it was no phantom, but his very Lord; but Peter's fault would be of another kind. His words mean rather: "*Since* it is Thou, command me to come unto Thee;" for he feels rightly that Christ's command must go before his coming. And, doubtless, it was the promptness and forwardness of love which made him ask for this command, which made him desire to be where his Lord was (John xxi. 7). Perhaps, too, he would compensate for that exclamation of terror in which he had joined with the rest, by an heroic act of courage and affiance. And yet there was a fault in all this, as the issue proved, which made the whole incident a rehearsal of the greater presumption, and the more serious fall which was in store for the too confident disciple (Matt. xxvi. 33, 70). In that "*Bid me,*" the fault lay. He will outdo and outdare the other disciples; will signalize himself by a mightier testimony of faith than any of

them would venture to render. It is but in another shape, “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.”

Let us observe, and with reverence admire, the wisdom and love of the Lord’s answer. Another, having enough of spiritual insight to detect the fault which lurked in Peter’s proposal, by a coarser treatment might have marred all, and lost for him the lessons it so much behoved him to receive. Had the Lord, for example, commanded him to remain where he was, He would at the same time have checked the outbreaks of his fervent spirit, which, when purified from the carnal which clung to them, were to carry him so far, and caused him to miss the instruction which through his partial failure he obtained. But with more gracious and discriminating wisdom the great Master of souls, who yet, knowing what the event must prove, pledges not Himself for the issue of his coming. Peter had said, “*Bid me;*” there is no “*I bid,*” in the Lord’s reply. Peter had said, “*come unto Thee;*” the “*unto Me*” disappears from the Lord’s answer; which is only “*Come;*” “Come, that is, if thou wilt; make the experiment, if thou desirest.” It is a merely permissive “*Come;*” like Joab’s “Run” to Ahimaaz (2 Sam. xviii. 22). In that “*Come;*” an assurance is, indeed, involved that Peter should not be wholly swallowed up by the waves, but no pledge for the successful issue of the feat; which all, in the very faithfulness of the Lord, would have been involved, had *his* words been the entire echo of his disciple’s. What the issue should be, depended upon Peter himself,—whether he should keep the beginning of his confidence firm unto the end. And He who knew what was in man, knew that he would not; that this was not the pure courage of faith; that what of carnal overboldness there was in it would infallibly be exchanged, when the stress of the trial came, for fear and unbelief.

It was even so. “*When Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*” This for a while; so long as he looked to his Lord and to Him only, he also was able to walk upon the unsteady surface of the sea, to

tread upon the *waters*, which for him also were not *waves*. But when he took counsel of flesh and blood, when he saw something else besides Jesus, when, because “*he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*” He who had thought to make a show before all the other disciples of a courage which transcended theirs, must now in the presence of them all confess his terror, and reveal the weakness, as he had thought to display the strength, of his faith. In this moment of peril his swimmer’s art (John xxi. 7) profits him nothing ; for there is no mingling of nature and grace in this way. He who has entered the wonder-world of grace must not suppose that he may withdraw from it at any moment that he will, and betake himself to his old resources of nature. He has foregone these, and must carry through what he has begun, or fail at his peril.

But Peter has to do with One who will not let him greatly fall. His experience shall be that of the Psalmist: “When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.”\* His “*Lord, save me,*” is answered at once. “*Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him.*” And then how gracious the rebuke! “*Oh thou of little faith!*” not “*Oh thou of none!*” and “*wherefore didst thou doubt?*” not “*wherefore didst thou come?*” not checking, as He then would have done, the future impulses of his servant’s boldness, but rather encouraging them, showing him how he could do all things through Christ strengthening him, and that his fault lay, not in having undertaken too much, but in having too little relied upon the strength that would have upheld him in his undertaking.† And not until by that sustaining hand He has restored confidence to the fearful one, and made

\* Augustine very beautifully brings together those words of the Psalmist and this incident, making them mutually to illustrate one another (*Enarr. in Ps. xciii. 18*).

† Bengel: Non reprehenditur quod exerit e navi, sed quod non manserit in firmitate fidei.

him feel that he can indeed tread under foot those waves of the unquiet sea, does He speak even this word of a gentle rebuke. The courage of the disciple has already returned, so that the Master speaks of his doubt as of something which is already past: “*Wherfore didst thou doubt?* Before the doubt arose in thy heart, thou didst walk on these waves, and now that thy faith has returned, thou dost walk on them again; thou seest that it is not impossible, that it lies but in thy faithful will; that all things are possible to him that believeth.”

We must look at this episode of the miracle as itself also symbolic. Peter is here the example of all the faithful of all times, in the seasons of their unfaithfulness and fear. So long as they are strong in faith, they are able to tread under foot all the most turbulent agitations of an unquiet world; but when they are afraid, when, instead of “looking unto Jesus,” they look at the stormy winds and waters, then these prevail against them, and they begin to sink, and were it not for Christ’s sustaining hand, which is stretched out in answer to their cry, they would be wholly overwhelmed and swallowed up.\*

“*And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.*” Those on the watch for disagreements between one Evangelist

\* Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. xxxix. 6*): Calca mare, ne mergaris in mari. And again (*Serm. lxxxvi. 6*): Attendite seculum quasi mare, ventus validus et magna tempestas. Unicuique sua cupiditas, tempestas est. Amas Deum, ambulas super mare: sub pedibus tuis est, seculi tumor. Amas seculum, absorbebit te. Amatores suos vorare novit, non portare. Sed cum fluctuat cupiditate cor tuum, ut vineas tuam cupiditatem, invoca Christi divinitatem. . . . Et si motus est pes tuus, si titubas, si aliqua non superas, si mergi incipis, dic, Domine, pereo, libera me. Dic, Domine, pereo, ne pereas. Solus enim a morte carnis liberat te, qui mortuus est in carne pro te. And again: Titubatio ista, fratres, quasi mors fidei fuit. Sed ubi exclamavit, fides iterum resurrexit. Non ambularet, nisi crederet, sed nec mergeretur, nisi dubitaret. In Petro itaque communis omnium nostrum consideranda conditio, ut si nos in aliquo tentationum ventus conatur subvertere, vel unda submergere, clamemus ad Christum. Cf. *De Canticis Novo*, 2.

and another are pleased here to discover such, between St. Matthew and St. Mark on one side, and St. John on the other. If we are to believe the former, the Lord did now with his disciple go up into the ship; if, on the contrary, we accept the authority of St. John, we must then suppose that the disciples were *willing* to receive Him; but did not so in fact, the ship being rapidly, and, as would seem, with miraculous swiftness, brought to the land. The whole question turns on the words which we translate, and I have no doubt rightly as regards the circumstance which actually took place, "*they willingly received Him into the ship.*" It is quite true they would be more literally rendered, "*they were willing to receive Him into the ship;*" but with the implicit understanding that what they were willing to do, they actually did. Those who a little before were terrified and dreaded his approach, as though it had been a spirit, were now willing to receive Him into the ship with them, and did so receive Him;\*. "*and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.*"

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\* Our Translators would have done better if, following the earlier English Versions, they had rendered *ἡθελον λαβεῖν αὐτόν*, "*they were willing to receive Him.*" Probably to Beza's influence we owe the change. For voluerunt recipere eum of the Vulgate he substitutes *volente animo receperunt eum*, and defends the translation thus: *Itaque verbum ἡθελον opponitur ei quod ante dixerat, eos videlicet fuisse perterritos: ex quo intelligitur ipsos initio fuisse cum aver-satos, nūne vero agnitiā ejus voce et mutatis animis eum quem fugiebant, cupide accepisse in navem.* This is perfectly true; yet had the passage been left, "*they were willing to receive Him,*" none reading this Gospel of St. John in the light of the other two, could have doubted that this willingness, which, now when they knew it was indeed their Master, they felt, issued in the actual receiving of Him: and none could have accused our Translators of going out of their way to produce a harmony which in the original did not so evidently exist. That *θέλειν* means often to wish to do a thing *and to do*, we have abundant proof in the Greek of the N. T. Thus Matt. xviii. 23, a king desired to take account (*ἡθέλησε συνάρπαι λόγον*) with his servants, and, as we know from the sequel, did so; again, John i. 43, Jesus desired to go forth into Galilee (*ἡθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν*), and, as we learn ii. 11, actually went. The word, when no more is added, may quite as well imply an accomplished, as a baulked, desire; cf. Luke xx. 46; 1 Cor. x. 27. It is of this passage that a recent assailant of the credibility of our Gospels has written, "By the irre-

St. Mark, as is so often his wont, does not fail to describe to us how this and all which they had witnessed called forth the infinite astonishment of his disciples: “*they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered;*” while from St. Matthew we learn that the impression was not confined to them alone; but “*they that were in the ship,*” others who were sailing with them,\* caught a momentary glimpse of the greatness of Him in whose presence they stood; and “*came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God*” (cf. John i. 49). They felt more or less clearly that here was One who must stand in wonderful relation with HIM of whom it is written, “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known” (Ps. lxxvii. 19); “Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters” (Hab. iii. 15); “Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea” (Job ix. 8†).

concileable contradiction between John and the synoptic Evangelists in the matter of receiving Christ into the ship, one or other account must be given up.” To be sure he does his best to make a contradiction, if he cannot find one; for he says *kai* in the second clause of ver. 21 must be taken *adversative*,—“they were willing to receive Him into the ship, *but* straightway the ship was at the land;” and De Wette, *Aber alsbald war das Schiff am Lande.* Let any one estimate the honesty of such a tampering with the record on which judgment must proceed.

\* Jerome: Nautæ atque vectores.

† Ο περιπατῶν, ὡς ἐπ' ἔδαφους, ἐπὶ θαλάσσης. Eusebius (*Dem. Evang.* ix. 12) finds a special fulfilment of these words of Job in this miracle, as also in these waves the symbol of a mightier and wilder sea, even that of sin and death, which Christ trod under his feet when He, in a far higher sense than that in which the words were first spoken,

. . . . metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari;

and he quotes Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14: “Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength, Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters; Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest them to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness;” and Job xxxviii. 16, 17, where the Almighty says to man: “Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

It is a docetic\* view of the person of Christ, which conceives of his body as permanently exempt from the law of gravity, and in this way explains the miracle; a hard and mechanical view, which places the seat of the miracle in the waters rendered solid under his feet. Rather was it *the will* of Christ, which bore Him triumphantly above those waters; even as it was the will of Peter, that will, indeed, made in the highest degree active and potential by faith on the Son of God, which should in like manner have enabled him to walk on the great deep, and, though with partial and transient failure, did so enable him. It has been already observed that the miracle, according to its true idea, is not the violation, nor yet the suspension of law, but the incoming of a higher law, as of a spiritual in the midst of natural laws, and the momentary assertion, for that higher law, of the predominance which it was intended to have, and but for man's fall it would always have had, over the lower; and with this a prophetic anticipation of the abiding prevalence which it shall one day recover. Exactly thus was there here a sign of the lordship of man's will, when that will is in absolute harmony with God's will, over external nature. In regard of this very law of gravitation, a feeble, and for the most part unconsciously possessed, remnant of his power survives to man in the well-attested fact that his body is lighter when he is awake than sleeping;† a fact which every nurse who has carried a child would be able to attest. From this we conclude that the human consciousness, as an inner centre, works as an opposing force to the attraction of the earth and

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Have the gates of death been opened unto *thee*, and hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?" that is, "Hast thou done this, as I have done?"

\* The Cathari, a Gnostic sect of the Middle Ages, actually appealed to this miracle in confirmation of their errors concerning the body of Christ, as a heavenly, and not a truly human, body (Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. p. 1126).

† It was noticed long ago by Pliny, *H. N.* vii. 18.

the centripetal force of gravity, however unable now to overbear it.\*

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\* Prudentius (*Apotheosis*, 655) has some sounding lines upon this miracle:

Ipse super fluidas plantis nitentibus undas  
Ambulat, ac presso firmat vestigia fluetu;  
Increpat ipse notos, et flatibus otia mandat . . .  
Ninguidus agnoscit Boreas atque imbrifer Eurus  
Nimborum dominum, tempestatumque potentem,  
Excitamque hyemem verrunt ridente Sereno.

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## 18. THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF ONE BORN BLIND.

JOHN ix.

IT is on the whole most probable that this work of grace and power crowned the day of that long debate with Jewish adversaries, which, beginning at John vii. 34, reaches to the end of the following chapter,—the history of the woman taken in adultery being only an interruption, and an intercalation easily betraying itself as such. Our Lord then, as He was passing from the temple, to escape the last arguments of his foes, will have paused—probably in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple, where beggars, cripples, and other afflicted persons took their station (Acts iii. 1, 2), to accomplish this miracle. Nothing in the narrative indicates a break. That long “contradiction of sinners” which the Lord endured found place, we know, on a Sabbath, for the last day of the feast of tabernacles (vii. 37) was always such; and on a Sabbath, to all appearance the same Sabbath, He opened this blind man’s eyes (ix. 14). Moved by these reasons, the ancient interpreters see here a continuous unbroken narration, and with them most of the modern consent.\*

It has been by some objected, that, first concealing Himself, and then escaping for his life, He must on that day have left the temple alone; here, on the contrary, his disciples are around Him. But what more natural than that they also should have extricated themselves, though not in the same wonderful manner as He did, from the angry multitude, and have rejoined their Master without? Then again, if it be urged that this work was wrought in a more leisurely manner, with more apparent freedom from all fear of inter-

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\* As Maldonatus, Tittmann, Tholuck, Olshausen.

ruption than could well have been, when now He had only just withdrawn Himself from the extreme malice of his foes, may not all this be accepted as a beautiful evidence of *his* calmness in the midst of his enemies, who found no time inopportune for a work of mercy and love; who, having hardly left behind Him the Jewish stones, tarried to accomplish this work of grace? And may not something of this lie in ver. 4, 5? "I must work this work now, however out of season it may seem: for '*the night*,' which my enemies are bringing on, is near, and then the time for working will be over" (compare the exactly parallel passage, John xi. 7-10).

It is singular that some should ask, How could the disciples have known that this man "*was blind from his birth*"?\* He was evidently a well-known beggar in Jerusalem, with whose tale many were acquainted (ver. 8); he may have himself proclaimed his lifelong calamity, with the object of stirring pity in the passers by. One way or other the fact had come to the knowledge of the disciples, and out of it their question grew. Their Master must solve for them the difficulty which this more than ordinary calamity presented, and explain to them its cause. "*Who did sin*," they ask, "*this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*" But what they could have had in their minds when they suggest the former alternative, how they could have supposed it possible that for his *own* sins the man had been *born* blind, has naturally been the source of much perplexity.

Three or four explanations have been offered: the first, that the Jews believed in a transmigration of souls; and thus that the sins which the disciples assumed as possible causes of his blindness, were those of some anterior life,—antenatal sins, which were being punished and expiated now. This, as is well known, is the doctrine of the Buddhists; and not an accident, but belonging to the centre of their religious con-

\* Ἐκ γενετῆς = ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός, Acts iii. 2; xiv. 8. There, as here, a life-long defect is removed.

victions: but it cannot be proved that there was any such faith among the Jews. It may have been the dream of a few philosophic Jews, who had obtained some acquaintance with the speculations of the East, but was never the faith of plain and simple men: so that this explanation may be regarded as altogether antiquated, and not worthy even to be considered.\*

Lightfoot adduces passages to show that the Jews believed a child might sin in its mother's womb, in proof of which their Rabbis referred to the struggle between Jacob and Esau (Gen. xxv. 22); and he, and others after him, think that out of this popular belief the question of the disciples grew.

Tholuck, following an earlier interpreter, supposes their notion to have been that God had foreknown some great sin which this man would commit, and so by anticipation had punished him. But as such a dealing on God's part is altogether without analogy in Scripture, so is there not the slightest hint that men had ever fallen on it as an explanation of the suffering in the world; nor, indeed, could they: for while the idea of retribution is one of the deepest in the human heart, this of punishment running before the crime which it punishes, is one from which it as wholly revolts.

Chrysostom imagines that it was upon their part a *reductio ad absurdum* of the argument which connected sin and suffering together. The man could not have brought this penalty on himself; for he was born with it. His parents could not by their sin have brought it on him; for we know that each man shall bear his own burden, that the children's teeth are not set on edge because the parents ate sour grapes. But this is very artificial, and with little of likelihood in it.

\* The passages quoted from the *Wisdom of Solomon* (viii. 19, 20) and from Josephus (*B. J.* ii. 8, 14) are misunderstood, when applied in this sense.

Honest and simple hearted men, like those who asked the question here, would have been the last to try and escape a truth, to which the deepest things in their own hearts bore witness, by an ingenious dilemma.

Rather, I believe they did not see, at the moment when they put the question, the self-contradiction, as far ~~as~~ least as words go, which was involved in the first alternative which they put before their Lord ; so that, while they rightly, and by a most true moral instinct, discerned the links which unite the sin and suffering of the world together, yet in this case they did not realize how it must have been the sin and suffering, not of this man as an individual, but of him as making part of a great whole, which were thus connected together. They did not at the moment perceive that the mere fact of this calamity reaching back to his birth at once excluded and condemned the uncharitable suspicion, that wherever there was a more than ordinary sufferer, there was also a more than ordinary sinner,—leaving only the most true thought, that a great sin must be cleaving to a race, of which any member could so greatly suffer.

This, as it is continually affirmed in Scripture, so we cannot suppose that it was intended to be denied in the answer of the Lord : “*neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents,*”—words which of course need for their completion—“that he should have been born blind.” The Lord neither denies the sin of his parents, nor his own ; all that He does is to check in his disciples that most harmful practice of diving down with cruel surmises into the secrets of other men’s lives, and, like the friends of Job, guessing for them hidden sins in explanation of their unusual sufferings. This blindness, He would say, is the chastening of no *peculiar* sin on his own part, nor on his parents’. Seek, therefore, its cause neither here nor there ; but see what nobler explanation the evil in the world, and this evil in particular, is capable of receiving. The purpose of the life-long blindness of this man is “*that the works of God should be made manifest in him;*”

and that through it and its removal the grace and glory of God might be magnified. Not, indeed, as though this man had been used merely *as a means*, visited with this blindness to the end that the power of God in Christ might be manifested to others in its removal. The manifestation of the works of God has here a wider reach, and embraces in it the lasting weal of the man himself; it includes, indeed, the manifestation of those works to the world and *on the man*; but it does not exclude, rather of necessity includes, their manifestation also *to him and in him*. It entered into the plan of God for the bringing of this man to the light of everlasting life, that he should thus for a while be dark outwardly; that so at once upon this night, and on the night of his heart, a higher light might break, and the Sun of righteousness arise on him, with healing in his wings for all his bodily and all his spiritual infirmities: while again this was part of a larger whole, and fitted in, according to his eternal counsels, to the great scheme for the revelation of the glory and power of the Only-begotten to the world (cf. John xi. 4; Rom. v. 20; ix. 17; xi. 25, 32, 33).

Yet, while it was thus, we are not to accept this as the entire and exhaustive solution of this man's blindness. For it is the pantheistic explanation of evil, that it is not really evil, but only the condition of, and the transition to, a higher good; only appearing, indeed, as evil at all from a low standing point, and one which does not as yet behold the end. But this explanation of the world's evil, tempting as it has ever shown itself, so tempting that multitudes have been unable to resist its attraction, is not that which the Scriptures offer. They ever recognize the reality of evil; and this, even while that evil, through the boundless resources of the Divine love, magnifies more the glory of the Creator, and ultimately exalts higher the blessedness of the creature. This cannot, then, be the whole explanation of the blindness which this man had brought with him into the world; but God, who though not the author, is yet the disposer, of evil,—who

distributes that which He did not Himself bring in, and distributes it according to the counsels of his wisdom and righteousness and grace, had willed that on this man should be concentrated more than the ordinary penalties of the world's universal sin, that a more than ordinary grace and glory might be revealed in their removing.

And now the Lord girds up Himself to the work which is before Him, and justifies Himself in undertaking it: "*I must work the works of Him that sent Me,\* while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" Whatever perils attended that work, yet it must be accomplished; for his time, "*the day*" of his open activity, of his walking up and down among the people, and doing them good, was drawing to an end. "*The night,*" when He should no longer lighten the world with his presence, nor have the opportunity of doing, with his own hands at least, works like these, was approaching. He worked in the day, and was Himself the light of the day. The image is borrowed from our common day and our common night, of which the first is the time appointed for labour, "*man goeth forth to his work until the evening*" (Ps. civ. 23); while the latter, by its darkness, opposes to many kinds of labour obstacles insurmountable. The difficulty which Olshausen finds in the words, "*when no man can work,*" inasmuch as, however Christ was Himself withdrawn from the earth, yet his disciples did effectually work,† rises solely from his missing the point of the proverbial phrase. Our Lord does not affirm "*The night cometh, in which no other man can work; in which no work can be done;*" but only, in the language of a familiar proverb which is as true

\* This was a favourite passage with the Arians; see Augustine, *Serm. cxxxv. 1-4*, and his answer there to their abusive interpretation.

† The same difficulty strikes Augustine: *Numquid nox erat, quando claudus ille ad verbum Petri salvus effectus est, immo ad verbum Domini habitantis in Petro? Numquid nox erat, quando transeuntibus discipulis ægri cum lectulis ponebantur, ut vel umbrâ transeuntium tangerentur?*

for the heavenly kingdom as for this present world, "No man who has not done *his* work in the day, can do it in the night; *for him* the time cometh in which he cannot work;" and He does not exclude even Himself from this law.\* And then, with prophetic allusion to the work before Him, "*As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;* what work then will become Me better than this of opening the blind eyes? where should I find so fit a symbol of my greater spiritual work, the restoring of the darkened spiritual vision of mankind?"†

Having thus justified the work which is before Him, He proceeds to the cure. "*When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.*" A medicinal value was attributed in old time to saliva,‡ it is similarly used in the case of another blind man (Mark viii. 23), and of one suffering from a defect in the organs of speech and hearing (Mark vii. 33); neither are we altogether without examples of the medicinal use of clay.§ Still we must not suppose that,

\* The power of triviality can reach no further than it has reached in the exposition of Paulus. Christ is for him no more than a skilful oculist, who says, "I must take this cure in hand while there is yet daylight to see; for when it is dark I could not attempt so fine and delicate an operation." See back, pp. 78-81.

† So Cyril: Ἐπέπερ ἀφῆματι φωτίσων τὰ ἐν ἐνδείᾳ φωτὸς, δεῖ με καὶ τοὺς τοῦ σώματος τὰ φῶς μεταδοῦναι.

‡ The virtue especially of the saliva jejuna, in cases of disorders of the eyes, was well known to antiquity. Pliny (*H. N.* xxviii. 7) says, Lippitudines matutinā quotidie velut inunctione arceri. In both accounts (Suetonius, *Vespas.* 7; Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 8) of that restoring of a blind man to sight, attributed to Vespasian, the use of this remedy occurs. In the latter the man appears begging of the emperor, ut genas et oculorum orbes dignaretur respargere oris excremento; and abundant quotations to the same effect are to be found in Wetstein (in loc.).

§ Thus Serenus Samonicus, a physician in the time of Caracalla, who wrote a poem upon medicine:

Si tumor insolitus typho se tollat inani,  
Turgentes oculos vili circumline coeno.

In this healing by clay, being as it is that very thing which (in the shape of dust) most often afflicts and wounds the eyes, Augustine

*besides* his divine power, the Lord *also* used natural remedies, or that these were more than conductors, not in themselves needful, but which He freely assumed as channels for the conveying of his grace (cf. 2 Kin. iv. 41; Isai. xxxviii. 21); for other blind eyes He opened without employing any such means (Matt. xx. 30-34). Probably the reasons which induced their use were ethical. It may have been a help to the weak faith of this man to find that something external was done.

What was the exact purport of the command, “*Go, wash in the pool of Siloam*”? It was certainly something more than a mere test of obedience. Was the cure itself to result, altogether, or in part, from that washing? Or was the tempered clay the sole agent of healing, and the washing merely designed to remove the hindrances which this itself, if suffered to remain, would have opposed even to the restored organs of vision? Our answer to this question must in good part depend on the answer we give to another—this namely, Did St. John see anything significant and mystical in the etymology of Siloam, that he should add it here, “*which is by interpretation, Sent*”? Was it his intention to give here an etymology merely, or did he trace any symbolic meaning in the fact that the Lord should have sent the man to a pool bearing such a name? If the latter, I must needs believe that it was also his intention to connect the actual cure with the washing in that pool. But how is it possible to suppose that he did *not* see a prophetic significance in the name “*Siloam*,” or that, except for this, he would have paused to

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(*In Ev. Joh. tract. ii.*) finds a striking analogy with the healing of flesh through flesh, our flesh through Christ's flesh: Gloriam ejus nemo posset videre, nisi carnis humilitate sanaretur. Unde non poteramus videre? Irruerat homini quasi pulvis in oculum, irruerat terra, sauciaverat oculum, videre non poterat lucem: oculus ille sauciatus inunguitur; terrâ sauciatus erat, et terra illuc mittitur, ut sanetur. . . . De pulvere cœcatus es, de pulvere sanaris: ergo caro te cœcaverat, caro te sanat. Irenæus (v. 15) finds another mystery here.

insert in his narrative the derivation of the word? (cf. i. 38, 42). This, appropriate enough in a lexicon, would have been quite inappropriate in a gospel. At the same time, it is not very easy to determine exactly what his allusion is. Olshausen dissents from those who find in “*Sent*” a reference to Christ Himself, and this on the ground that He was not now the “*Sent*,” but the Sender. Yet might the Evangelist very well have alluded, not to this particular healing, in which it is true He is more Sender than Sent, but rather to the whole work of his ministry, which was a *mission*,\* which He ever characterizes as a work whereto He was the *Sent* of God (John vii. 29; viii. 42); so that He bears this very title, “the *Apostle†* of our profession” (Heb. iii. 1). These waters of Siloam, in which the blind man washed and was illuminated, may well have been to St. John the type of the waters of baptism, or indeed of all the operations of grace by which the spiritually blind eyes are opened; the very name of the pool having in his eyes a presaging fitness, which by this notice he would indicate as more than accidental.

The man is no Naaman, resenting the simplicity of the means by which his cure should be effected, and only after a while persuaded to adopt them. He was at once obedient to the word of the Lord: “*He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing;*” returned, that is, according to all appearance, to his own house; it does not seem that he came back to the Lord. His friends and neighbours are the first who take note of the cure which has been wrought;—

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\* Augustine (*Serm. cxxxv. 1*): *Quis est ipse Missus, nisi qui dixit in ipsâ lectione, Ego, inquit, veni ut faciam opera ejus qui misit me;* and *In Ev. Joh. tract. xliv.*: *Misit illum ad piscinam quæ vocatur Siloë.* Pertinuit autem ad Evangelistam commendare nobis nomen hujus piscinæ, et ait, *Quod interpretatur Missus.* Jam quis sit Missus agnoscitis: nisi enim ille fuisset missus, nemo nostrum esset ab iniqüitate dimissus. So Clrysostom, *Hom. lvii. in Joh.* On St. John’s derivation of Siloam, see Tholuck’s *Beiträge zur Spracherklärung des N. T.* p. 123, where he also enters into the hard question of its position, whether at the east or west side of the city.

† *Απόστολος*, as compared with *ἀπεσταλμένος* here.

well-disposed persons, as would appear, but altogether under the influence of the Pharisees. They wonder, debate whether it is indeed he whom they had known so long ; for the opening of the eyes, those windows of the soul, would have altered the whole character of the countenance.\* “*Some said, This is he ; others said, He is like him ;*” and so the debate proceeded, until the man himself cut it short, and “*said, I am he.*” They would fain learn how the cure was effected ; and hearing from his lips of the wonder-worker who had wrought it, desire to see Him. Finally, as the safest course, they bring the man, with no evil dispositions either towards him or towards Christ, to their spiritual rulers,—not, that is, before the great Sanhedrim, for that was not always sitting, but the lesser,—“*to the Pharisees.*” The Sanhedrim did not indeed exclusively consist of these (for Caiaphas was a Sadducee, and see Acts xxiii. 6), but these were the most numerous and influential party there, and the bitterest enemies of the Lord. The neighbours may have misdoubted of the work, as having been done on the Sabbath ; and on this account deemed it advisable to bring the matter before their ecclesiastical rulers.

More formally examined by them, the man can only repeat his simple tale : “*He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.*” Very characteristically he speaks of the clay only, for, being blind, that only came within the scope of his knowledge, who judged by the feeling alone ; *how* the clay had been tempered he was ignorant. The Pharisees first discuss the matter among themselves. Some seek to rob the deed of its significance by a charge against the doer : “*This man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day.*” Granting then its reality, it proved nothing in favour of Him that wrought it ; rather was it to be inferred, since He was thus an evident transgressor of God’s commandment, that He was in connexion with the powers of evil. No lighter

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\* Augustine : Aperti oculi vultum mutaverant.

charge than that which they made at another time, when they said, “ He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils” (Matt. ix. 34), was involved in this word of theirs. But there was throughout all these events, which were so disastrously fixing the fortunes of the Jewish people, an honester and better party in the Sanhedrim, of which Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were the noblest representatives; men like the Polcs and Contarinis at another great epoch of the Church; not in number, perhaps still less in courage, equal to the stemming of the fierce tide of hostility which was rising against the truth,—a tide which probably in the end drew most even of them into its current (cf. John xii. 42, 43); only here and there one and another, such as those above named, extricating themselves from it. These from time to time made their voices to be heard in the cause of righteousness and truth. Thus, on the present occasion, did they at the first claim that He should not at once be prejudged a sinner and a breaker of God’s law, who had done such miracles as these. Even their own Doctors were not altogether at one concerning what was permitted on the Sabbath, and what not; some allowing quite as much as this and more, for only the alleviation of disorders in the eyes. They might therefore plead that the Spirit of God might well have directed Him in this that He did, and they ask, *“ How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?”* Yet the shape which their interference takes, the form of a question in which it clothes itself, is, as Chrysostom remarks, that of timid and irresolute men, who dare only to hint their convictions. No wonder that they should be in the end overborne and silenced by their more unscrupulous adversaries, even as now they prove unequal to the obtaining of a fair and impartial hearing of the matter.

The interrogation in the verse following, *“ What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes?”* has been frequently, but wrongly, understood, not as one question, but as two. The mistake is a very old one, for Theodore of Mopsu-

estia finds fault with them who divide the question here into two clauses, as thus—“*What sayest thou of Him ? That He hath opened thine eyes ?*” making the second clause to have its rise in the doubts which the Pharisees felt, or pretended to feel, concerning the reality of the miracle. In truth there is but one question, “*What sayest thou of Him because\* He hath opened thine eyes ?* what conclusion drawest thou from thence?” The answer is then to the point, “*He said, He is a prophet ;*”†—not yet the Messiah, not yet the Son of God; of these higher dignities of his benefactor the man as yet has no guess; but what he believes Him he boldly declares Him, “*a prophet,*”—one furnished with a message from above, and attesting that message by deeds which no man could do, except God were with him (John iii. 2; iv. 19; vi. 14). They who asked this, cared not in the least for the judgment of the man, but they hoped to mould him into an instrument for their own wicked purposes. Chrysostom indeed, whom Theophylact and Euthymius follow, understands this “*What sayest thou of Him ?*” as the speech of the better-disposed in the Sanhedrim, who hope that the testimony of the man himself may go for something; but this is little probable. Rather the drift of the question is that he, perceiving what would be welcome to them, and following the suggestions which they had thrown out, should turn against his benefactor, and ascribe the opening of his eyes to the power of an evil magic. But a rare courage from above is given to him, and he dares, in the face of these formidable men whom he is making his foes, to avouch his belief that the work and the doer of the work were of God.

The inquisitors now summon his parents, hoping to tamper

\* “Οτι = ἵπερ οὐ.

† Our Version no doubt in general conveys to the English reader the wrong impression; it had done so at least for many years to me. Yet the manner of pointing, with the absence of the second note of interrogation, shows that the Translators had rightly apprehended the passage.

more successfully with them, to win a lie from them, a declaration that their son had not been born blind. But they prosper no better in this quarter. His parents reply as those who will not be made accomplices in a fraud, though with no very high desire to witness or to suffer for the truth. Nay, there is something selfish, and almost cowardly, in their manner of extricating themselves from a danger in which they are content to leave their son. The questions put to them are three : “*Is this your son?*”—“*Whom ye say was born blind?*”—“*How then doth he now see?*” The first two they answer in the affirmative : “*This is our son*”—“*He was born blind*”—the third they altogether decline—“*By what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.*” They could not have told the truth without saying something to the honour of Jesus ; and they will not do this, fearing to come under the penalties which the Sanhedrim had lately pronounced against any that should “*confess that He was Christ.*” We are not to understand by this that the Sanhedrim had formally declared Jesus to be an impostor, a false Christ, but only that, so long as the question of the truth or falsehood of his claims to be the Messiah was not yet clear,—and they, the great religious tribunal of the nation, had not given their decision,—none were to anticipate that decision ; and any who should thus run before, or, as it might prove, run counter to, their decision, “*should be put out of the synagogue,*”—that is, should be excommunicated. There appear to have been two, or some say three, kinds of excommunication among the Jews, greatly differing in degrees and intensity ; and Christ often speaks of them, as among the sharpest trials which his servants would have to endure for his name’s sake (John xvi. 2). The mildest form was exclusion for thirty days from the synagogue ; to this period, in case the excommunicated showed no sign of repentance, a similar or a longer period, according to the will of those that imposed the sentence, was added : in other ways too it was made sharper ; it was accompanied with

a curse; none might hold communion with him now, not even his family, except in cases of absolute necessity. Did the offender show himself obstinate still, he was in the end absolutely separated from the fellowship of the people of God, cut off from the congregation,—a sentence answering, as many suppose, to the delivering to Satan in the apostolic Church\* (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20).

The man had been removed, while his parents were being examined. The Pharisees now summon him again, and evidently by their address would have him to believe that they had gotten to the bottom of all, had discovered the whole fraud, so that any longer persistence in it would be idle: “*Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.*” They are as men seeking to obtain confession from one they suspect, by assuring him that others have confessed, and thus that for him to stand out in denying, will only make matters worse for him in the end. “Now we know,” they would say, “that it is all a collusion; we have indubitable proofs of it; do thou also give glory to God, and acknowledge that it is so.” Our “*Give God the praise*” sets the English reader of this passage on a wrong track. They do not mean, “Give the glory of thy cure to God, and not to this sinful man, who in truth could have contributed nothing to it”—attempting, in Hammond’s words, “to draw him from that opinion of Christ which he seemed to have, by bidding him to ascribe the praise of his cure wholly to God, and not to look on Christ with any veneration.” So indeed Jeremy Taylor: “The spiteful Pharisees bid him give glory to God, and defy the minister; for God indeed was good, but He wrought that cure by a wicked hand.” But they cannot mean this; for

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\* Our Lord is thought to refer to all these three degrees of separation, Luke vi. 22, expressing the lightest by the ἀφορίζειν, the severer by the ὀνειδίζειν, and the severest of all by the ἐκβάλλειν. But it may well be doubtful whether these different grades of excommunication were so accurately distinguished in his time (see Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Bann*, and Vitringa, *De Synagogâ*, p. 738).

they did not allow that any cure had taken place at all; on the contrary, they professed to believe that it was a deception and conspiracy throughout, gotten up between Christ and the man who was before them. The words are rather an adjuration to him that he should speak the truth\* (cf. Josh. vii. 19). Hitherto he has been acting as though he could deceive not merely men but God, but now let him honour or "*give glory*" to God, uttering that which is truth before Him, and avouching so his belief in Him as a God of knowledge, of righteousness, and of truth; whom no lie will escape, and who will show Himself a swift witness against all ungodliness of men. "*We know that this man is a sinner*, a more than ordinary transgressor, one, therefore, to whom last and least of all would God have given this higher power; your story then cannot be true; we who have the best opportunities of knowing, know this." They will overbear him with the authority of their place and station, and with their confident assertion.

The man, whom we must recognize throughout as ready-witted, genial, and brave, declines altogether to enter on a question which was plainly beyond his knowledge; "*Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not;*" yet, as Chrysostom observes, he does not in the least by his answer allow the alternative that He was so. This is a matter which he knows not; he will speak, however, the thing which he does know, and they may draw their own conclusions; "*One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*" They perceive that they can gain nothing in this way, and they require him to tell over again the manner of his cure; "*Then said they to*

\* The phrase is often used more generally as an adjuration to repentance of every kind, which is indeed in the highest sense a taking shame to ourselves, and in that a giving glory only to God (1 Sam. vi. 5; Jer. xiii. 16; 1 Esdr. ix. 8; Rev. xvi. 9). Seneca (*Ep.* 95) speaks very nobly of this giving glory to God, as the great work of every man: *Primus est Deorum cultus, Deos credere: deinde reddere illis majestatem suam, reddere bonitatem, sine quâ nulla majestas est.*

*him again, What did He to thee ? how opened He thine eyes ?”* hoping either to detect on a second repetition some contradictions in his story, or to find something which they can better lay hold of, and wrest into a charge against the Lord ; or perhaps, utterly perplexed how to escape from their present entanglement, they ask for this repetition to gain time, and in the hope that some light may break upon them presently.

But the man has grown weary of the examinations to which they are submitting him anew, and there is something of defiance in his answer : “ *I have told you already, and ye did not hear : wherefore would ye hear it again ?* ”—and then, with an evident irony, “ *Will ye also\* be his disciples ?* ” It is clear that these words cut them to the quick, though it is not so clear what exactly is the taunt conveyed by them. Is it this ? “ How idle to tell you over again, when there is that deep-rooted enmity in your hearts against this man, that, though convinced a hundred times, you would yet never acknowledge it, or sit as learners at his feet.† Will ye also become his disciples ? I trow not.” This is the commonest explanation of the words ; but does not, however, agree perfectly with their reply. In that they earnestly repel the indignity of being, or intending to be, disciples of his. Such a disclaimer would have been beside the mark, if he, so far from accusing them of any such intention, had on the contrary laid to their charge, that no evidence, no force of truth, could win them to this. More probably then the man, in this last clause of his answer, affects to misunderstand their purpose in asking a repetition of his story : “ Is it then, indeed, that the truth is at length winning you also to its side, so that you too would fain find my story true, and yourselves

\* In the *καὶ ἵμεν* of the man there may lie, as Chrysostom has observed, a confession that *he* was, or intended to be, a follower of this prophet. Bengel : *Jucunde observari potest fides apud hunc hominem, dum Pharisæi contradicunt, paullatim exoricens.*

† Calvin : *Significat quamvis centies convicti fuerint, maligno hostilique affectu sic esse occupatos ut nunquam cessuri sint.*

sit as disciples at this man's feet?" With this the angry rejoinder of the Pharisees will exactly correspond. Nothing could have stung them more than the bare suggestion of such a discipleship on their parts: "*They reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple,*" or "*Thou art that man's disciple,*"\* "*but we are Moses' disciples*"—setting, as was their wont, Moses against the Lord, and contrasting their claims: "*we know that God spake unto Moses;*" he had a commission and an authority; but "*as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is;*" all is obscure, uncertain about Him; there is no proof that God has given Him a commission, no one can certainly affirm whether He be from above or from beneath.

This confession of their inability to explain this new and wonderful appearance, this acknowledgment that they were at fault, emboldens the man yet further. They had left a blot, and this plain yet quick-witted man fails not to take instant advantage of it. There is an irony keener yet in his present retort than in his last: "*Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes.*" This is wonderful; here is one evidently clothed with powers mightier than man's, able to accomplish a work like this; and you, the spiritual rulers of our nation, you that should try the spirits, should be able to pronounce of each new appearance whether it be of God or not, here acknowledge your ignorance, and cannot decide whence He is, whether of earth or of heaven.† But I know, for you have yourselves declared the same (see ver. 24), *that God heareth not sinners*; now this man He *hath* heard, and enabled Him to do a work without parallel; therefore I know

\* Σὺ εἰ μαθητὴς ἐκείνου. Bengel well: Hoc verbo removent J esum a sese.

† Compare our Lord's question to his adversaries, Matt. xxi. 25: "The baptism of John whence was it ( $\piόθεν \etaν$ )? from heaven or of men?" which best explains the  $\piόθεν$  (=  $\epsilon\nu ποίᾳ \epsilon\xi\sigma\sigma\tauᾳ$ , ver. 24) here. In the same way Pilate's question to our Lord, "Whence art Thou?" (John xix. 9) is to be explained, "To what world dost Thou belong?"

whence He is; He is of God; for were He otherwise He could have never done the things which He has done."

It is interesting to observe how rapidly the man's faith and insight and courage have grown during this very examination. He who had said a little while before, "*Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not,*" avoiding the answer, now declares boldly, "*We know that God heareth not sinners.*" Nor need we take exception, as many have taken, at his maxim, nor urge, as they have thought it needful to do, that this saying has no scriptural authority,\* being the utterance neither of Christ nor of one of his inspired servants, but only

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\* Thus Origen (*In Esai. Hom.* v.): Peccatores exaudit Deus. Quod si timetis illud quod in Evangelio dicitur, Scimus quia peccatores non exaudiat Deus, nolite pertimescere, nolite credere. Cœcus erat qui hoc dixit. Magis autem credite ei qui dicit, et non mentitur, Etsi fuerint peccata vestra ut eocinum, ut lanam dealbabo. But elsewhere rightly (*Comm. in Rom. v. 18*): Aliud est peccare, aliud peccatorum esse. Peccator dicitur is, qui multa delinquendo in consuetudinem, et, ut ita dicam, in studium peccandi iam venit. Augustine (*Serm. cxxxvi.*): Si peccatores Deus non exaudit, quare spem habemus? Si peccatores Deus non exaudit, ut quid oramus et testimonium peccati nostri tunsione pectoris dicimus [Luke xviii. 10]. Certe peccatores Deus exaudit. Sed ille qui ista dixit, nondum laverat faciem cordis de Siloâ. In oculis ejus præcesserat sacramentum: sed in corde nondum erat effectum gratiæ beneficium. Quando lavit faciem cordis sui cœcus iste? Quando cum Dominus foras missum a Judæis, intromisit ad se. Cf. *Serm. cxxxv.* 5. Elsewhere (*Con. Lit. Parmen.* ii. 8) he shows that his main desire is thus to rescue the passage from Donatist abuses. These last, true to their plan of making the sacraments and other blessings of the Church to rest on the subjective sanctity of those *through* whose hands they passed, and not on the sure promise of Him *from* whose hands they came, misapplied these words. "*God heareth not sinners;*" how then, they asked, can these minister blessings to others? It would be enough to answer that it is not them whom God hears, but the Church which speaks through them; nor did it need, because of this abuse of the words, to make exception against the statement itself, as though it smacked of errors from which the man was not yet wholly delivered. Calvin better: Falluntur qui cœcum ex vulgi opinione sic loquutum esse putant. Nam *peccator* hic quoque ut paulo ante impium et sceleratum significat (ver. 24). Est autem hæc perpetua Scripturæ doctrina, quod Deus non exaudiat nisi a quibus vere et sincero corde vocatur. . . . Ideo non male ratiocinatur cœcus, Christum a Deo profectum esse, quem suis votis ita propitium habet.

of a man not wholly enlightened yet, in whose mind truth and error were yet struggling. That the words have in themselves no authority is most true; still they may well be allowed to stand, and that in the intention of the speaker. For the term "*sinner*" has a two-fold meaning in Scripture. Sometimes it is applied to all men, as they are fallen children of Adam, each with the burden of his own sin upon him. If, taking the word in this sense, it were affirmed, "*God heareth not sinners*," this were indeed to say, God heareth not any man; or if by "*sinners*" were understood those who have been in time past more than ordinary transgressors, and it were implied that such therefore would not be heard, though they truly turned, this too would be an impeaching of God's grace. But the Scripture more commonly knows another and emphatic use of the term "*sinners*,"—men *in their sins*, and not desiring to be delivered out of them\* (Isai. xxxiii. 14; Gal. ii. 15); and in this sense, which is the sense of the speaker here, as of the better among the Pharisees, who a little earlier in the day had said, "*How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?*" (ver. 16; cf. x. 21), it is most true "*that God heareth not sinners*;" their prayer is an abomination; and even if they ask, they obtain not their petitions† (Isai. i. 11-15; lix. 1, 2; Prov. i. 28; xv. 8, 29; xxviii. 9; Ps. l. 16; lxvi. 18; cix. 7; Job xxvii. 9; xxxv. 13; Jer. xiv. 12; Amos v. 21-23; Mic. iii. 4; Jam. iv. 3).

This was what least of all the Pharisees could endure, that the whole relations between themselves and this man should

\* Thus Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* evi. 18): Non est hoc nomen [peccatores] in Scripturis usitatum eorum, qui licet juste ac laudabiliter vivant, non sunt sine peccato. Magis enim, sicut interest inter irridentes et irrisores, inter murmurantes et murmuratores, inter scribentes et scriptores, et cetera similia: ita Scriptura peccatores appellare consuevit valde iniquos, et grandibus peccatorum sarcinis onerosos.

† The words are so true that Jeremy Taylor has made them the text of three among his noblest sermons, *The return of Prayers, or the conditions of a prevailing Prayer*.

thus be reversed,—that he should thus be *their* teacher; and while it was now plain that he could neither be cajoled nor terrified from his simple yet bold avowal of the truth, their hatred and scorn break forth without any restraint: “*Thou wast altogether born in sins*, not imperfect in body only, but, as we now perceive, maimed and deformed in soul also, *and dost thou teach us?*\* Thou that camest forth from thy mother’s womb with the note of thy wickedness upon thee, dost thou school us, presuming to meddle and be a judge in such matters as these?” They take the same view of his calamity, namely, that it was the note of a more than ordinary sinfulness, which the disciples had suggested; but make hateful application of it. It is characteristic enough that they forget that the two charges, one that he had never been blind, and so was an impostor,—the other that he bore the mark of God’s anger in a blindness which reached back to his birth,—will not agree together. “*And they cast him out,*” —which does not merely mean, as some explain it (Chrysostom, Maldonatus, Grotius, Tholuck), rudely flung him forth from the hall of judgment, wherever that may have been; but, according to the decree which had gone before, they declared him to have come under those sharp spiritual censures denounced against any that should recognize the prophetic office of the Lord. Only so would the act have the importance which (ver. 35) is attached to it. No doubt the sign and initial act of this excommunication was the thrusting him forth and separating him from their own company;† and so that other explanation of the passage has its relative truth.‡ Yet this was not all, or nearly all, involved in the words. This violent putting of him forth from the hall of audience

\* Bengel: Exprobant de cœcitate pristinâ. Calvin: Perinde illi insultant, acsi ab utero matris cum scelerum suorum notâ prodiisset.

† Corn. a Lapide: Utrumque eos fecisse est credibile, scilicet cœcum ex domo, et hoc symbolo ex Ecclesiâ, suâ, ejecisse. Ἐκβάλλειν will then have the technical meaning which it afterwards retained in the Church (see Suicer, *Thes.* s. v.).

‡ See Vitrunga, *De Synagoga*, p. 748.

was only the beginning of the things which he should suffer for Christ's sake. Still there was, to use the words of Fuller on this very occasion, this comfort for him, that "the power of the keys, when abused, doth not shut the door of heaven, but in such cases only shoot the bolt beside the lock, not debarring the innocent person entrance thereto."

And in him were to be fulfilled in a very eminent sense those words, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke vi. 22). He is cast out from the meaner fellowship, to be received into the higher,—from that which was about to vanish away, to be admitted into a kingdom not to be moved. The synagogue, so soon to be "the synagogue of Satan," rejects him; the Church of the living God, and Christ the great bearer of the keys in that kingdom, receives him; for in him the words of the Psalmist shall be fulfilled, "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up" (Ps. xxvii. 12). He has not been ashamed of Christ, and now Christ reveals his true name and his glory unto him; so that he beholds Him no longer as a prophet from God, which was the highest height to which hitherto his faith had reached, but as the Son of God Himself. Thus to him that hath is given, and he ascends from faith to faith. "*Jesus heard that they had cast him out,*" and, Himself the Good Shepherd, went in search of his sheep in this favourable hour for making it his own for ever, bringing it safely home to the true fold;—"and when He had found him," encountered him, it may be, in the temple (cf. John v. 14), "*He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" The man knows what the title means, that it is equivalent to Messiah, but he knows not any who has a right to claim it for his own: such trust, however, has he in his Healer, that whomsoever He will point out to him as such, he will recognize. "*He answered and said unto Him, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him,*

*Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.*" These words "*Thou hast seen Him,*" do not refer to some anterior seeing; for it does not appear that the man, after his eyes were opened at the pool, had returned to the Lord, or that he had enjoyed any opportunity of seeing Him since; but contain a reply to the question, "*Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?*" "He is one whom thou hast seen already; thou askest to see Him, but this seeing is not still to do; ever since thou hast been speaking with Me thine eyes have beheld Him, for it is no other than Himself that talketh with thee."\*

And now the end to which all that went before was but an introduction, has arrived: "*He said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him:*" not that even now we need suppose him to have known all that was contained in that title, "*Son of God,*"—or that, *worshipping* Him, he intended to render Him that supreme adoration, which is indeed due to Christ, but only due to Him because He is one with the Father. For "*God manifest in the flesh,*" is a fact far too transcend- ant for any man to receive at once: the minds even of Apostles themselves could only dilate little by little to receive it. There were, however, in him the preparations for that crowning faith. The seed which should unfold into that perfect flower was safely laid in his heart; and he fell down at the feet of Jesus as of one more than man, with a deep religious reverence and fear and awe. And thus the faith of this poor man was accomplished; step by step he had ad- vanced, following faithfully the light which was given him; undeterred by opposition which would have been fatal to a weaker faith, and must have been so to his, unless the good seed had cast its roots in a soil of more than ordinary depth. But because it was such a soil, therefore when persecution arose, as it soon did, for the word's sake, he was *not offended*

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\* Corn. a Lapide: *Et vidisti eum, nunc cum se tibi ipse videndum offert.*

(Matt. xiii. 21); but enduring still, to him at length that highest grace was vouchsafed, to know the only-begotten Son of God, however as yet he may not have seen *all* the glorious treasures that were contained in that knowledge.

So wonderful was the whole event, so had it brought out the spiritual blindness of those who ought to have been the scers of the nation, so had it ended in the illumination, spiritual as well as bodily, of one who seemed among the blind, that it called forth from the Saviour's lips those remarkable words in which He moralized the whole: "*For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind:* I am come to reveal every man's innermost state; I, as the highest revelation of God, must bring out men's love and their hatred of what is divine as none other could (John iii. 19-21); I am the touchstone; much that seemed true shall at my touch be proved false, to be merely dross; much that for its little sightlessness was nothing accounted of, shall prove true metal: many, whom men esteemed to be seeing, such as the spiritual chiefs of this nation, shall be shown to be blind; many, whom men counted altogether unenlightened, shall, when my light touches them, be shown to have powers of spiritual vision undreamt of before." Christ was the King of truth,—and therefore his open setting up of his banner in the world was at once and of necessity a ranging of men in their true ranks, as lovers of truth or lovers of a lie;\* and He is here saying of Himself the same thing which Simeon had said of Him before: "*Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, . . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*" (Luke ii. 34, 35). He is the stone on which men build, and against which men stumble,—and set for this purpose as well as that (1 Pet. ii. 6-8; cf. 2 Cor. ii. 16). These words call out a further contradiction on the

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\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh.* tract. xliv.): *Dics ille divisorat inter lucem et tenebras.*

part of the Pharisees, and out of this miracle unfolds itself that discourse which reaches down to ver. 21 of the ensuing chapter. They had shown what manner of shepherds of the sheep they were in their exelusion of this one from the fold : “with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them” (Ezek. xxxiv. 4\*): our Lord proceeds to set over against them Himself, as the good Shepherd and the true.

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\* This whole chapter of Ezekiel may be profitably read in the light of the connexion between these 9th and 10th chapters of St. John.

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## 19. THE RESTORING OF THE MAN WITH A WITHERED HAND.

MATT. xii. 9-13; MARK iii. 1-5; LUKE vi. 6-11.

THIS is not the first of our Lord's cures on the Sabbath day,\* which stirs the ill-will of his adversaries, or which is used by them as a pretext for accusing Him; twice already we have seen the same results to follow (John v. 16; ix. 12); yet I have reserved till now the consideration, once for all, of the position which our Lord Himself took in respect of the Sabbath, and the light in which He regarded it. For this the present is the most favourable occasion; since here, and in the discourse which immediately precedes this miracle, and which stands, if not quite in such close historic connexion as might at first sight appear on reading it in the Gospel of St. Matthew, yet in closest inner relation to it, our Lord Himself deals with the matter, and delivers the weightiest words which on this matter fell from his lips.

To go back then to that preceding discourse, and the circumstances which gave rise to it;—the Pharisees were offended with the disciples for plucking ears of corn and eating them upon the Sabbath,—not indeed with the act itself, as an invasion of other men's property, for the very law which they claimed to vindicate had expressly permitted as much: “When thou comest into the standing corn of thy

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\* The cures recorded are seven in number, namely, that of the demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum (Mark i. 21); that of Simon's wife's mother (Mark i. 29); of the impotent man at Bethesda (John v. 9); of this man with a withered hand; of the man born blind (John ix. 14); of the woman with a spirit of infirmity (Luke xiii. 14); of the man who had a dropsy (Luke xiv. 1). We have a general intimation of many more, as at Mark i. 34; and the “one work” to which our Lord alludes, John vii. 21-23, is perhaps no recorded miracle, but one which is only referred to there.

† See Robinson's *Researches*, vol. ii. p. 192.

neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand" (Deut. xxiii. 25); and the disciples had done no more. By limitations even slight as this upon an absolute proprietorship God asserted that He was Himself the true proprietor of all the land, and that all other holders held only of Him. Not in what they did then, but in the day on which they did it, the fault of the disciples, if any, consisted. The Pharisees accuse them to their Lord: "*Why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?*" Either He shall be obliged to confess his followers transgressors of the law; or, defending them, shall become a defender of the transgression;—in either case a triumph for his foes. So they calculate, but the issue disappoints their calculation. The Lord seeks in his reply to raise the objectors to a truer point of view from which to contemplate the act of his disciples; and by two examples, and these taken from that very law which they believed they were asserting, would show them how the law, if it is not to work mischievously, must be spiritually handled and understood. These examples are borrowed, one from the O. T. history, the other from that temple service continually going on before their eyes. The first, the well-known event which occurred during David's flight from Saul (1 Sam. xxi. 1-6), his claiming and obtaining the show-bread from the High priest, would naturally carry much weight with them whom Christ was seeking to convince, David being counted the great pattern and example of O. T. holiness: "Will ye affirm that they did wrong,—David who in that necessity claimed, or the priest who gave to him, the holy bread?" The second example came yet nearer home to the gainsayers, and was more convincing still, being no exceptional case, but grounded in the very constitution of the Levitical service: "Ye do yourselves practically acknowledge it right that the rest of the Sabbath should give place to a higher interest, to the service of the temple; that, as the lesser, it should be subordinated, and, where needful, offered up to this as the greater: the sacrifices, with all the laborious preparations which they re-

quire, do not cease upon the Sabbath (Num. xxviii. 8, 9); all which is needful for completing them is accomplished upon that day; yet no one accounts the priests to be therefore in any true sense violators of that holy day;\* rather would they be so, if they left these things undone.”†

And then, lest the Pharisees should retort, or in their hearts make exception, that the work referred to was done in the service of the temple, and was therefore permitted, while here there was no such serving of higher interests, He adds, “*But I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple;*” One whom therefore, by still better right, his servants may serve, and be guiltless.‡ He contemplates his disciples as already the priests of the New Covenant, of which He is Himself the living Temple.§ It was in their

\* They had themselves a maxim to the same effect: *Ministerium pellit sabbatum.*

† It is the same argument which He pursues John vii. 22, 23. There He says, “For the sake of circumcision you do yourselves violate the Sabbath. Rather than not keep Moses’ commandment, which requires the child to be circumcised upon the eighth day, you will, if that day fall upon a Sabbath, accomplish all the work of circumcision upon that. You make, that is, the Sabbath, which is lower, give place to circumcision, which is higher, and therein you have right. But the cures which I accomplish are greater than circumcision itself: that is but receiving the seal of the covenant upon a single member; my cures are a making the entire man (*ὅλος ἀνθρωπός*) whole. Shall not the Sabbath then by much better right give place to these works of mine?”

‡ Coccoeus gives admirably the meaning here: *Hoc argumentum urget contra tacitam exceptionem, nempe, discipulos Christi in agro non in templis fecisse opus non sacerdotale. Christus ostendit maiorem templo hic esse, significans se Dominum templi esse, Mal. iii. 1; Jer. xi. 15. . . . Quemadmodum igitur sacerdotes licite fecerunt opera, quae pertinebant ad cultum Dei ceremonialem; ita discipuli Christi licite fecerunt illa quae necesse erat facere, ut servirent ipsi vero templo et Domino templi.* The argument is not affected by admitting *μεῖζον* instead of *μείζων* into the text, as Lachmann and the best critical editions have done: compare Matt. xii. 42, *ἴδοι πλεῖον Σολομῶντος ὥδε.*

§ I know not whether there is a force in Augustine’s remark (*Quæst. xvii. in Matth. qu. 10*): *Unum exemplum datum regiæ potestatis de David, alterum sacerdotalis de iis qui per ministerium templi sabbatum violant: ut multo minus ad ipsum evulsarum sabbato spi-*

needful service and ministration to Him, which so occupied them as that they had not time regularly to prepare food or to eat, that they were an hungred, and profaned, as their adversaries accounted it, the Sabbath. . But if those who yet ministered in that temple which was but the shadow of the true, were thus privileged,—if, as every man's conscience bore witness, they were blameless in such a profanation as this, and only seemingly transgressed the law, really to keep it, how much more those who ministered about the Temple not made with hands, the true Tabernacle, which the Lord had pitched and not man?\*

But it is not enough to absolve his disciples of any fault in this matter; the malignant accusation must not pass without rebuke: these “judges of evil thoughts” shall be themselves judged. Therefore He continues: “*But if ye had known what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*” If with all their searching into the Scripture, all their busy scrutiny of its letter, they had ever so entered into the spirit of that law, whereof they professed to be the jealous guardians and faithful interpreters, as to understand that Scripture, they would not have blamed them in whom no true blame can be found. The citation, now made for a second time by our Lord (cf. Matt. ix. 13), is from Hos. vi. 6, and leaves some ambiguity on the mind of an English reader; which would have been avoided by some such translation as this, “*I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.*”† The words are most memorable; they contain one of those prophetic glimpses of the Gospel, one of those slights cast upon the law even during

carum crimen pertineat, qui verus rex et verus sacerdos est, ideo Dominus sabbati.

\* Irenæus (*Con. Hær.* iv. 8, 3): Per legis verba suos discipulos excusans, et significans licere sacerdotibus libere agere. . . . Sacerdotes autem sunt omnes Domini Apostoli, qui neque agros neque domos hæreditant hic, sed semper altari et Deo serviunt.

+ In the LXX, “Ἐλεος θέλω, ἡ θυσίαν, καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν Θεοῦ, ἡ ὀλοκαυτώματα.

the time when the law was in force,\* an example of that “finding fault” on God’s part with that very thing which He had Himself established†(Heb. viii. 8), whereby a witness was borne even to them that lived under it, that it was not the highest, God having some better and higher thing in reserve for his people (Jer. xxxi. 31-34). The prophet of the Old Covenant is here anticipating the great Apostle of the New, and saying in other words, but with as distinct a voice: “Though I speak with the tongues of men. and of Angels, and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3). He is declaring that what God longs for on the part of men is not the outward observance, the sacrifice in the letter, but the inward outpouring of love, that which the “sacrifice” symbolized, the giving up of self in the self-devotion of love (cf. Heb. x. 5-10; Ps. li. 16, 17). This must underlie every outward sacrifice and service which is to have any value in his sight ; and when the question arises between the form and the spirit, so that the one can only be preserved at the loss of the other, then the form must yield to the life, as the meaner to the more precious.†

\* Among those slights, the words, “Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live” (Ezek. xx. 25), are often enumerated ; by Melanethon, by Reinecius (*Deus ne sua quidem legi hunc honorem tribuit, quod mereatur vitam eternam*), and by many more ; but this erroneously. Depreciating words are spoken of the Old Covenant ; yet this is ever *relatively*, and only in comparison with the New ; never this absolute blane (Vitrunga, *Obss. Sac.* vol. i. p. 265 ; *præcepta non bona, ἐν ἔμφασει, in quibus nihil inerat boni*). The verse is to be explained by the verse ensuing, with which it stands in intimate connexion. The “*I gave*” here, is but the *παρέθωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεός* of Rom. i. 26; cf. Acts vii. 42; 2 Thess. ii. 11. These “statutes that were not good” were the heathen abominations to which God gave them over.

† Exactly in obedience to this precept, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice,” and with a true insight into the law of love, as the highest law of all, those holy men have acted, that in great needs have sold the most sacred vessels of the Church for the redemption

But the application of the words in the present case still remains unsettled. For it either may be: "If you had truly understood what God asks of men, what service of theirs pleases Him best, you would have understood that my disciples were offering that, who in true love and pity for perishing souls had so laboured and toiled as to go without their necessary food, being thus obliged to satisfy the cravings of a present hunger;\*" you would have owned that their loving transgression was better than many a man's cold and heartless clinging to the letter of the commandment." Or else the words may have more direct reference to the Pharisees themselves: "If you had understood the service wherein God delighted the most, you would have sought to please Him by meekness and by mercy,—by a charitable judgment of your brethren,—by that love out of a pure heart, which to Him is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices (Mark xii. 33), rather than in the way of sharp and severe censure of your brethren" (Prov. xvii. 15; Isai. v. 23). In this way Olshausen,† who adds: "This merciful love was just what was wanting in the fault-finding of the Pharisees. It was no true bettering of the disciples which they desired; no pure zeal for the cause of God urged them on. Rather sought they out of envy and an inner bitterness to bring something against the disciples; and, in fact, out of this did, in an apparent zeal for the Lord, persecute the Lord in his disciples." They '*condemned the guiltless*;' for the disciples had not out of *ennui*, for mere pastime's sake, plucked the ears, but out of hunger (ver. 1). Their own they had forsaken, and they hungered now in their labour for the kingdom of

of captives, or for the saving in some great famine lives which otherwise would have perished.

\* So Maldonatus: *Hoc est quod Apostolos maxime excusabat, quod in prædicando et faciendis miraculis adeo fuissent occupati, ut nec parare cibum nec capere possent.*

† In like manner Wolf (*Curæ, in loc.*): *Non dubitaverim verba hæc opponi judicio Phariseorum immiti et rigido, de discipulis tanquam violatoribus sabbati, rato.*

God. They stood therefore in the same position as David the servant of God, who, in like manner, with them that were with him, hungered in the service of the Lord; as the priests, who in the temple must labour on the Sabbath, and so for the Lord's sake seem to break the law of the Lord. While this was so, *they* also might without scruple eat of the show-bread of the Lord: what was God's, that was theirs."

St. Mark has alone preserved for us the weighty words which follow: "*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*" (ii. 27). The end for which the Sabbath was ordained was to bless man; the end for which man was created was not to observe the Sabbath. A principle is here laid down, which it is clearly impossible to confine to the Sabbath alone. Rather it must extend to the whole circle of outward ordinances. It does in fact say this, the law was made for man; not man for the law. Man is the end, and the ordinances of the law the means; not these the end, and man the means (cf. 2 Macc. v. 19; a remarkable parallel). Man was not made to the end that he might observe these; but these were given, that they might bless man, that they might train and discipline him till he should be ready to serve God from the free impulses of his spirit.\* And all this being so, "*therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath*." Now to say here with Grotius, that "*Son of man*" has no wider and deeper meaning than "*man*" in the verse preceding, that the context will admit of no other, and to draw from these words that the Sabbath being made for man, man therefore can deal with the Sabbath as he will, is a serious error.† For, in the first place, there is no one

\* Even in the Talmud it was said, "The Sabbath is in your hands, not you in the hands of the Sabbath; for it is written, The Lord hath given you the Sabbath, Exod. xvi. 29; Ezek. xx. 12."

† Cœcilius answers well: Non sequitur; Hominis causâ factum est sabbatum: Ergo homo est dominus sabbati. Sed bene sequitur: Ergo is, cuius est homo, et qui propter hominem venit in mundum, quicunque omnem potestatem in cœlo et terrâ possidet, in hominis salutem et bonum est et Dominus sabbati. Ceterum Dominus sabbati

passage of the N. T. where “Son of man” (occurring as it does eighty-eight times) means other than the Messiah, *the man* in whom the idea of humanity was altogether fulfilled. And then secondly, among all the bold words with which St. Paul sets out man’s relations to the law, he never speaks of him, even after he is risen with Christ, as being its “*lord*;” so that an interpretation might well be suspicious, even if it had every thing else to recommend it, which claimed this prerogative for him. The redeemed man is not, indeed, *under* the law; he is released from its rule, so that it is henceforth *with him*, as a friendly companion, not *over him*, as an imperious schoolmaster.\* But for all this it is God’s law; and he, so long as he is still in the flesh, and therefore may continually need its restraints upon his flesh, never stands *above* it; rather, at the first moment of his falling away from the liberty of a service in Christ, will come *under* it anew. Even of the ceremonial law man is not lord, to loose *himself* from it, as upon the plea of insight into the deeper mysteries which it shadows forth: he must wait a loosing from it at those hands from which it first proceeded, and which first imposed it upon him. But the Son of man, who is also Son of God, He has power over all these outward ordinances: He Himself first gave them for the training of man, as a preparatory discipline; and when they have done their work, when this preparatory discipline is accomplished, He may remove them (Heb. ix. 11-15). “Made *under* the law” in his human nature (Gal. iv. 4), He is *above* the law, and lord of it, by right of that other nature which is joined with his human. *He* therefore may pronounce *when* the shadow shall give place to the substance, *when* his people have so embraced the last that they may forego the first. And it was the sign and evidence that these outward ordi-

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non esset, nisi esset supremus νομοθέτης, et nisi ad ipsius gloriam pertineret sabbati institutio, et ejus usus ad salutem hominis.

\* He is not, to use Augustine’s fine distinction, *sub* lege, but *cum* lege and *in* lege.

nances had done their work, when *He* was come, in whom the highest gifts of God to men were imparted. The very fact that the highest was committed to Him involved his power over all lower forms of teaching. Christ is “the end of the law”—in every way the end, as that to which it pointed, as that in which it is swallowed up; being Himself living law; yet not therefore in any true sense the destroyer of the law, as the adversaries charged Him with being, but its transformer and glorifier, changing it from law into liberty, from shadow to substance, from letter to spirit\* (Matt. v. 17, 18).

To this our Lord’s clearing of his disciples, or rather of Himself in his disciples (for the accusation was truly against Him), the healing of the man with a withered hand is by St. Matthew, as we have seen, immediately attached, although St. Luke shows us that it did not find place till the following Sabbath. Like another healing, very similar in its circumstances, that of the woman with the spirit of infirmity (Luke xiii. 11), like that too of the demoniac at Capernaum (Mark i. 2, 3), it was wrought in a synagogue. There, on the ensuing Sabbath, in “*their synagogue*,” the synagogue of those with whom He had thus disputed, He encountered “*a man who had his hand withered*;” his “*right hand*,” as St. Luke tells us. The disease under which he laboured, and which probably extended throughout the whole arm, was one occasioned by a deficient absorption of nutriment in the limb; it was, in fact, a partial atrophy, showing itself in a gradual wasting of the size of the limb, with a loss of its powers of motion, and ending with its total death. When once thoroughly established, it is incurable by any art of man.†

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\* Augustine (*Serm. cxxxvi. 3*): Dominus sabbatum solvebat: sed non ideo reus. Quid est quod dixi, sabbatum solvebat? Lux ipse venerat, umbras removebat. Sabbatum enim a Domino Deo præceptum est, ab ipso Christo præceptum, qui cum Patre erat, quando lex illa dabatur: ab ipso præceptum est, sed in umbrâ futuri.

† See Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. In the apocryphal *Gospel accord-*

The apparent variation in the different records of this miracle, that in St. Matthew the question proceeds from the Pharisees, in St. Mark and Luke from the Lord, is no real one; the reconciliation of the two accounts is easy. The Pharisees first ask Him, “*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*” He answers this question, as was often his custom (see Matt. xxi. 24), by another question. That this is such another counter-question comes out most plainly in St. Luke: “*I will ask you one thing. Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil? to save life or destroy it?*” With the same infinite wisdom which we admire in his answer to the lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbour?” (Luke x. 29), He shifts the whole argument, lifts it up altogether into a higher region, where at once it is seen on which side is the right and the truth. They had put the alternative of doing or not doing; there might be a question here. But He shows that the alternative is, doing good or failing to do good,—which last He puts as identical with doing evil, the neglecting to save as equivalent with destroying (Prov. xxiv. 11, 12). Here there could be no question; this under no circumstances could be right; it could never be good to sin. Therefore it is not merely allowable, but a duty, to do some things on the Sabbath.\* “Yea,” He goes on, “and things

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*ing to the Hebrews*, in use among the Nazarenes and Ebionites, which consisted probably of our St. Matthew, with some extraneous additions, this man appeared as a mason, and thus addresses the Lord: Cæmentarius eram, manibus vietum queritans: precor te, Jesu, ut mihi restituas sanitatem, ne turpiter mendicem cibos. The χεῦρα ἔχων ξηράν is = τὴν χεῦρα ἀδόπανῆς ὡν of Philostratus (*Vita Apollon.* iii. 39), whom the Indian-sages heal.

\* Danzius (in Meuschen, *N. T. ex Talm. illustr.* p. 585): Immutat ergo beneficis Servator omnem controversiæ statum, ac longe euñdem rectius, quam fraudis isti artifices, proponit. The object of the interesting and learned Essay, *Christi Curatio sabbathica vindicata ex legibus Iudaicis*, from which the above quotation is made, is to prove by extracts from their own books that the Jews were not at all so strict, as now, when they wanted to find an accusation against the Lord, they professed to be, in the matter of things permitted or prohibited on the Sabbath. He finds an indication of this (p. 607) in our Saviour’s

much less important and earnest than that which I am about to do, you would not yourselves leave undone. Which of you would not draw your sheep from the pit into which it had fallen on the Sabbath? and shall not I, the true Shepherd, rescue a sheep of my fold, a man, that is far better than a sheep? Your own consciences tell you that such were a true Sabbath work; and how much worthier this! You have asked me, Is it lawful *to heal* on the Sabbath? I reply, It is lawful *to do well* on that day, and therefore to heal." They can answer Him nothing further, "*they held their peace.*"

"*Then,*" — that is, "*when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts* (Mark iii. 5), — *said He to the man, Stretch forth thy hand.*" The existence of grief and anger together in the same heart is no contradiction. Indeed, with Him who was at once perfect love and perfect holiness, grief for the sinner must ever have gone hand in hand with anger against the sin; and this anger, which with us is ever in danger of becoming a turbid thing, of passing into anger against the man, who is God's creature, instead of being anger against the sin, which is the devil's corruption of God's creature, — with Him was perfectly pure; for it is not the agitation of the waters, but the sediment at the bottom, which troubles and defiles them, and where no sediment is, no impurity will follow on their agitation. This important notice of the anger with which the Lord looked round on these evil men we owe

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words, "*Thou hypocrite,*" addressed on one of these occasions to the ruler of the synagogue (Luke xiii. 15). Of course the great difficulty in judging whether he has made out his point, is to know how far the extracts in proof, confessedly from works of a later, often a far later, date than the time of Christ, do fairly represent the earlier Jewish canons. The fixity of Jewish tradition is much in favour of the supposition that they do; but there always remains something in these proofs, which causes them to fail absolutely to prove. In the apocryphal gospels, as for instance in the *Evangelium Nicodemi* (see Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus*, pp. 502, 558), it is very observable how prominent a place among the accusations brought against Christ on his trial, are the healings wrought upon the Sabbath.

to St. Mark alone, who has so often preserved for us a record of the passing lights and shadows which swept over the countenance of the Lord. The man obeyed the word, which was a word of power ; he stretched forth his hand, “*and it was restored\* whole like as the other.*” Hercupon the madness of Christ’s enemies rises to the highest pitch. He had broken their traditions ; He had put them to silence and to shame before all the people. Wounded pride, disappointed malice, rancorous despite, were mingled with and exasperated their other feelings of ill-will toward Him. “*They were filled with madness,*” and in their blind hate they snatch at any weapon whereby they may hope to destroy Him. They do not shrink from joining league with the Herodians, the Romanizing party in the land,—attached to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, who was only kept on his throne by Roman influence,—if between them they may bring to nothing this new power which seems equally to threaten both. So, on a later occasion (Matt. xxii. 16), the same parties combine together to ensnare Him. For thus it is with the sinful world : it lays aside for the moment its mutual jealousies and enmities, to join in a common conspiracy against the truth. It is no longer a kingdom divided against itself, when the kingdom of light is to be opposed. Herod and Pilate can be friends together, if it be for the destroying of the Christ (Luke xxiii. 12). He meanwhile, aware of their machinations, withdraws Himself from their malice to his safer retirements in the immediate neighbourhood of the sea of Galilee (Mark iii. 7).

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\* Ἀποκατεστάθη. Josephus (*Annt. viii. 8, 5*) uses the remarkable word ἀναζωπυρεῖν in relating the restoration of Jeroboam’s withered arm (1 Kin. xi. 6).

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## 20. THE WOMAN WITH A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY.

LUKE xiii. 10-17.

WE have here another of our Lord's cures, which, being accomplished on the Sabbath, awoke the indignation of the chief teachers of the Jewish Church; cures, of which many, though not all, are recorded chiefly for the sake of showing how the Lord dealt with these cavillers; and what He Himself contemplated as the true hallowing of that day. This being the main point which the Evangelist has in his eye, every thing else falls into the background. We know not where this healing took place; we are merely told of the Lord that "*He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.*" While there was but one temple in the land, and indeed but one for all Jews in all the world, there were synagogues in every place; and in these, on every Sabbath, prayer was wont to be made, and the word of God to be read and explained (Acts xiii: 14, 15). "*And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in nowise lift up herself.*" Had we only these words, "*a spirit of infirmity,*" we might be doubtful whether St. Luke meant to trace up her complaint to any other than the natural causes, whence flow the weaknesses and sufferings which afflict our race. But from later words of the Lord concerning this woman,—"*whom Satan hath bound,*"—we learn that her calamity had a deeper root; and that she should be classed with those possessed by evil spirits, though the type of her possession was infinitely milder than that of many others, as is shown by her permitted presence at the public worship of God. Her sickness having its first seat in her spirit, had brought her into a moody melancholic state, of which the outward contraction of the muscles

of her body, the inability to lift herself, was but the sign and the consequence.\*

*“And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.”* He did not here wait till his aid was sought, though it may have been that her presence in that place was, on her part, a tacit seeking of his help,—as, indeed, seems implied in the words of the ruler of the synagogue, bidding the multitude upon other days than the Sabbath to “*come and be healed.*” *“And He laid his hands on her,”*†—those hands being here the channel by which the streams of his truer life should flow into her,—uttering at the same time (for though recorded, as was ne-

\* This woman is often contemplated as the representative of all those whom the poet addresses—

Oh curvæ in terras animæ !

The erect countenance of man, in contrast with that bent downward of all other creatures, being the sign impressed upon his outward frame, of his nobler destiny, of a heavenly hope, with which they have nothing in common ;

Os homini sublime dedit, cælumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos in sidera tollere vultus :

and Juvenal, *Sat.* xv. 142-147, in a nobler strain : cf. Plato, *Timæus*, 90 A.; and the derivation of ἄνθρωπος, namely, the *upward looking*, which some have suggested, is well known. On the other hand, the looks ever bent upon the ground are a natural symbol of a heart and soul turned earthward altogether, and wholly forgetful of man's true good, which is not beneath, but above, him. Thus of Mammon Milton writes :

Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell  
From heaven ; for even in heaven his looks and thoughts  
Were always downward bent.

Thus Augustine (*Enarr. ii. in Ps.* lxviii. 24) : Qui bene audit, Sursum cor, curvum dorsum non habet. Erectâ quippe staturâ exspectat spem repositam sibi in cœlo . . . At vero qui futuræ vitæ spem non intelligunt, iam execrati, de inferioribus cogitant: et hoc est habere dorsum curvum, a quo morbo Dominus mulierem illam liberavit. Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* xxxvii. 7; *Quest. Evang.* ii. qu. 29; Ambrose, *Hexaëm.* iii. 12; Theophylact (in loc.) : Ταῦτα δέ μοι λάμβανε τὰ θαύματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπον συγκύπτει γάρ ψυχὴ ὅταν ἐπὶ τὰς γηῖνας μόνας φροντίδας νεύῃ, καὶ μηδὲν οὐράνιον ἡ θεῖον φαντάζηται.

+ Chrysostom (in *Cramer, Cutena*) : Προσεπιτίθησι δὲ καὶ χεῖρας αὐτῆς, ἵνα μάθωμεν ὅτι τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγον [Λόγου?] δύναμίν τε καὶ ἐνέργειαν ἡ ἀγία πεφόρηκε σάρξ.

cessary, one after another, we are to assume the words and imposition of hands as in fact contemporaneous) those words of grace and power. He said, and it was done; the bands, spiritual and bodily, by which she was held, were loosened; and "*immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*" Some part of this glory could not but redound to Him, the author of her health. But this the ruler of the synagogue could not bear (cf. Matt. xxi. 15, 16),—a "*hypocrite,*" as the Lord calls him,—zeal for God being but the cloak which he wore to hide, whether from others only, or, in a more hopeless hypocrisy, from his own heart also, his hatred of all that was holy and divine.\* His indignation was in fact less that the Sabbath was violated, than that Christ was glorified. Therefore, because he put forward as the ground of his anger that which was not so indeed, he drew down upon himself that sharp rebuke from Him, whose sharpest rebuke was uttered only in love, and who now would, if possible, have torn from off this man's heart the veil which was hiding his true self even from his own eyes. Another part of his falsehood was, that, not daring directly to find fault with the Lord, he seeks circuitously to reach Him through the people, who were more under his influence, and whom he feared less. He takes advantage of his position as the interpreter of the law and the oracles of God, and from "*Moses' seat*" would fain teach the people that this work done to the glory of God—this restoring of a human body and a human soul—this undoing the heavy burden—this unloosing the chain of Satan, —was a servile work, and one therefore forbidden on the Sabbath. Blaming them for coming to be healed, he indeed is thinking not of them, but means that rebuke to glance off on Him who has put forth on this day his power to help and to save.

*"The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite,*

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\* Augustine (*Enarr. ii. in Ps. lxviii. 24*): Bene scandalizati sunt de illâ erectâ, ipsi curvi. And again (*Serm. ccexcii. 1*): Calumnia-bantur autem erigenti, qui, nisi curvi?

*doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"\**\* Every word of this answer tells. The Lord does not defend his breach of the Sabbath, but denies that He has broken it at all:† "You have your relaxations of the Sabbath's strictness, required by the very nature and necessities of your earthly condition; you make no difficulty in the matter, where there is danger that by the omission of some act loss would ensue, your property would be jeopardized. Your ox and your ass are precious in your sight, and, whatever you may hold or teach concerning the strictness with which the Sabbath should be kept, disciples of Hillel or disciples of Schammai, you loose them on that day; yet ye will not that I should loose a human spirit, which as such is of more value than many beasts. They too, when you loose them, have not been tied up for more than some briefest space; while I, in your thoughts, may not unloose from the thraldom of Satan this captive of eighteen years.† Yours, farther, is a laborious process of unfastening and leading away to water,—which yet (and rightly) you do not omit; being at the same time offended with Me, who have only spoken a word, and with that word have released a soul."‡ There lies at the root of this argument, as of so much else in Scripture, an implied assertion of the specific

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 30): *Unusquisque vestrum sabbatis non solvit asinum aut bovem suum a præsepi et ducit ad potum?* Ergo secundum conditionem legis operatus, legem confirmavit, non dissolvit, jubentem nullum opus fieri, nisi quod fieret omni animæ, quanto potius humanæ. Cf. Irenæus, *Con. Hær.* iv. 8.

† Ambrose (*Exp. in Lue.* vii. 175): *Vinculum vineculo comparat.* . . . . Cum ipsis animalibus sabbato solvunt vincula, reprehendunt Dominum, qui homines a peccatorum vinculis liberavit.

‡ Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.* 112): *Tempus etiam inter se confert. Jumenta fortassis ad noctem unam aut paucos dies præsepi alligantur. At vero hæc foemina vel saltem ob temporis prolixitatem omnium commiseratione dignissima est.*

difference between man, the lord of creation, for whom all other things were made, on the one side, and all the inferior orders of beings that tread the same earth with him, and to which upon the side of his body he is akin, on the other. He is, yet at the same time he is much more than, the first link in this chain and order of beings (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 9 : "Doth God take care of oxen?" and Ps. viii. 8). But this woman has further claims than the general claims of humanity ; she is a "*daughter of Abraham*;" — an inheritress, as some understand, of the faith of Abraham,—however, for the saving of her soul in the day of the Lord, she had come for some sin under the scourge of Satan and this long and sore affliction of the flesh. Yet more probably Christ intends but this, that she was one of the chosen race, a "*daughter of Abraham*" after the flesh; though we may well believe that after and through this healing, she became something more, an inheritress of his faith as well.\*

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\* In a Sermon on the Day of the Nativity (*Serm. Inedl.* p. 33) Augustine makes the following application of this history: Inclinavit se, cum sublimis esset, ut nos qui incurvati eramus, erigeret. Incurvata siquidem erat humana natura ante adventum Domini, peccatorum onere depressa; et quidem se in peccati vitium sponte voluntate curvaverat, sed sponte se erigere non valebat. . . . Haec autem mulier formam incurvationis totius humani generis præferebat. In hâc muliere hodie natus Dominus noster vinculis Satanae alligatos absolvit, et licentiam nobis tribuit ad superna conspicere, ut qui olim constituti in miseriis tristes ambulabamus, hodie venientem ad nos medicum suscipientes, nimirum gaudeamus..

## 21. THE HEALING OF THE MAN WITH A DROPSY.

LUKE xiv. 1-6.

ALL which is most remarkable in the circumstances of this miracle has been already anticipated in others, chiefly in the two just considered, to which the reader is referred. Our Lord in his great long-suffering did not even at this late period of his ministry treat the Pharisees as wholly and finally hardened against the truth; but still seeking to win them for his kingdom, He had accepted the invitation of a chief among them “*to eat bread*” in his house. This was upon the Sabbath, with the Jews a favourite day for their festal entertainments: for it is a great mistake to suppose that the day was with them one of rigorous austerity; on the contrary, the practical abuse of the day was rather a turning of it into a day of riot and excess.\* The invitation, though accepted in love, yet had not been given in good faith; in the hope rather that the close and more accurate watching of his words and ways, which such an opportunity would afford, might furnish matter of accusation against Him.† Mischief lurked in the apparent courtesy which was shown Him, nor could the sacred laws of hospitality defend Him from the ever-watchful malice of his foes. They “*watched Him*.††

“*And behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy.*” Some have even suggested that this suf-

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\* On the abuses in this kind of the Jewish Sabbath at a later day see Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps. xci. 1*; *Enarr. ii. in Ps. xxxii. 2*; *Serm. ix. 3.*

† The emphasis, however, which Hammond finds in the *καὶ αὐτοῖς*, *even they that had invited Him did treacherously watch Him*,—as though the Evangelist would bring into notice the violation here of the laws of hospitality,—is questionable. Such a superabounding use of *καὶ* is not unusual in St. Luke.

†† Ἡσαν παρατηρούμενοι. For a similar use of *παρατηρεῖν* compare vi. 7; xx. 20; Mark iii. 2; Dan. vi. 11.

ferer was of design placed before Him; and they urge in proof that he would scarcely without permission have found entrance into a private house. But although it is quite conceivable of these malignant adversaries, that they should have laid such a snare as this, still there is no warrant for ascribing to them such treachery here; and the difficulty which some find, that if no such plot had existed, the man would scarcely have found his way into the house of the Pharisee, rests upon an ignorance of the almost public life of the East, and a forgetting how easily in a moment of high excitement, such as this of our Saviour's presence must have been, the feeble barriers which the conventional rules of society might have opposed to his entrance would have been overthrown (Luke vii. 36, 37). At any rate, if such plot there was, the man himself was no party to it; for the Lord "*took him, and healed him, and let him go.*"

But this He did, justifying first the work which He would accomplish, as more than once He had justified like works of grace and love wrought upon the Sabbath, and demanding of these lawyers and Pharisees, interpreters of the law, "*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*" Here, as in so many matters of debate, it only needs for the question to be rightly stated, and all is so clear, that the possibility of its remaining a question any longer has for ever vanished;\* there can be but one answer. But as this answer they would not give, they did what alone was possible, "*they held their peace;*" for they will not assent, and they cannot gainsay. He proceeds: "*Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?*" Olshausen: "As on other occasions (Matt. xii. 11; Luke xiii. 15), the Lord brings back those present to their

\* Tertullian (*Adv. Marc.* iv. 12): *Adimplevit enim et hic legem, dum conditionem interpretatur ejus, dum operum differentiam, illuminat, dum facit quæ lex de sabbati feris excipit, dum ipsum sabbati diem benedictione Patris a primordio sanctum, benefactione suâ efficit sanctiorem, in quo scilicet divina præsidia ministrabat.*

own experience, and lets them feel the keen contradiction in which their blame of Christ's free work of love sets them with themselves, in that, where their worldly interests were at hazard, they did that very thing whereof they made now an occasion against Him." We may observe, that as in that other case, where the woman was *bound*, He adduces the example of *unbinding* a beast (Luke xiii. 15),—so in this, where the man was dropsical, or suffering from water, the example He adduces has an equal fitness.\* "You grudge that I should deliver this man on such a day from the water that is choking him; yet if the same danger from water threatened ought of your own, *an ass† or an ox*, you would make no scruple of extricating that on the Sabbath. Why then do you not love your neighbour as yourselves? why are you unwilling that *he* should receive the help which you would freely render to your own? *And they could not answer Him again to these things.*" They were silenced, but not convinced; and the truth, which did not win them, did the only other thing which it could do, exasperated them the more; they replied nothing, biding their time (cf. Matt. xii. 14).

\* So Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 29): Congruenter hydropicum animali quod cecidit in puteum, comparavit: humore enim laborabat; sicut et illam mulierem quam decem et octo annis alligatam dixerat . . . comparavit jumento quod solvitur ut ad aquam ducatur. Grotius: Hydropicum submergenda pecudi, ut τὴν συγκύπτοντας pecudi vinotæ, comparavit.

† Strange as the reading *vios* instead of *ōvos* at first sight appears, "*a son*," and not "*an ass*," the authorities for it are so overwhelming (I believe they include *all* the Uncial MSS.), that one has no right on the ground of internal difficulties to reject it. Those, moreover, are not so serious as at first sight they seem. It is true the argument *a minori ad majus* is thus invalidated, but another is substituted in its room; an appeal, namely, to the great ethical rule, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" Griesbach recommended *vios*; Scholz, Tischendorf, and Lachmann have all received it. The passage at Exod. xxi. 33, to which the supporters of the reading *ōvos* appeal, to which I appealed myself in earlier editions of this book, tells both ways. It may support the reading *ōvos*, but it may also help to explain the substitution of this for another more correct one.

## 22. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEN LEPERS.

LUKE xvii. 11-19.

THE Jews who dwelt in Galilee, in their necessary journeys to keep the passover at Jerusalem, very commonly took the longer route, leading them across the Jordan, and through the region of Perea (the Gilcad of the O. T.), that so they might avoid the vexations and annoyances, or worse outrages,\* to which they were exposed in passing through the unfriendly land of the Samaritans. For these, at all times unfriendly to Jews, were naturally most unfriendly of all to the pilgrims who, travelling up to the great feasts at Jerusalem, did thus witness in act against the will-worship of Mount Gerizim, and the temple of Samaria in which was no presence of the living God (John iv. 22). It is generally understood that now, despite the discomforts and dangers of that inhospitable route (see Luke ix. 51-56; John iv. 9), our Lord, with the band of his disciples, on this his last journey to the holy city, took the more direct and shorter way which led Him straight from Galilee "*through the midst of Samaria*" to Jerusalem. Certainly the words of the original, "*And it came to pass as He went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee,*" may bear this meaning; in our Version they manifestly bear it. At the same time there may very well be a question whether the Evangelist does not rather mean that the Lord passed *between these two regions*, having one on his right hand, the other on his left, and skirting them both. This will explain the otherwise unaccountable mention of Samaria *before* Galilee. He will

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\* Josephus (*Antt.* xx. 6, 1) gives an account of the massacre by the Samaritans of a great number of Galilean pilgrims, which happened a little later than this.

then have journeyed due eastward toward Jordan, having Galilee on his left hand, and Samaria, which is therefore first named, on his right: and on reaching the river, He will either have passed over it at Scythopolis, where we know there was a bridge, crossing it again by the fords near Jericho\* (Josh. ii. 7), or will have kept on the western bank till He reached that city, where presently we find Him (xviii. 35).

*“And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.”* Their common misery had drawn these poor outcasts together (2 Kin. vii. 3). It had done more. It had caused them to forget the fierce national antipathy which kept Jew and Samaritan apart; for a Samaritan had found admission into this forlorn company. In this border land such a fellowship may have been more natural than elsewhere. There has been already occasion to speak of the nature and meaning of leprosy in the law of Moses; that it was the outward symbol of sin in its deepest malignity,—and therefore as involving entire separation from God; not of spiritual sickness only, but of spiritual death, since absolute separation from the one fountain of life must needs be no less. These poor outcasts, in obedience to the commandment (Lev. xiii. 46), “stood afar off;” and out of a deep sense of their misery, yet not without hope that a healer was at hand, all of them in earnest now to receive the benefit, however at a later period some were remiss in giving thanks for it, “lifted up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, † have mercy on us !”

\* So Wetstein: Non viâ rectâ et brevissimâ septentrione versus meridiem per Samariticam regionem iter fecit, sed cum confinia Samariæ et Galilææ venisset, ab itinere deflexit versus orientem, ita ut Samariam ad dextram, Galilæam ad sinistram haberet; et Jordânam Scythopoli, ubi pons erat, videtur transiisse, et *juxta* ripam Jordanis in Peræâ descendisse, donec e regione Jerichonitis iterum trajiceret.

† Ἐπιστάτα. The word is peculiar to St. Luke (v. 5; viii, 24, 45; ix. 33, 49). It is instead of the κύριε of St. Matthew.

*“And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go, show yourselves unto the priests.”* Most instructive is it to observe the differences in our Lord’s dealing with the different sufferers and mourners brought in contact with Him; the manifold wisdom of the great Physician, varying his treatment according to the varying needs of his patients; how He seems to resist a strong faith, that He may make it stronger yet (Matt. xv. 23-26); how He meets a weak faith, lest it should prove altogether too weak in the trial (Mark v. 36); how one He forgives first, and heals after (Matt. ix. 2, 6); and another, whose heart could only be reached through an earthly benefit, He first heals, and then pardons (John v. 8, 14). There is here, too, no doubt a reason why these ten are dismissed as yet uncleansed, and bidden to go show themselves to the priests; while that other, whose healing was before recorded (Matt. viii. 2-4), is first cleansed, and not till afterwards bidden to present himself in the temple. Herein was a keener trial of their faith. With no signs of restoration as yet upon them, they were bidden to do that which implied that they were perfectly restored,—to take a journey, which would have been ridiculous, a labour in vain, unless Christ’s words and promise proved true. In their prompt obedience they showed plainly that at least some weak beginnings of faith were working in them, the germs of a higher faith, which yet in the end were only perfectly unfolded in one of them.\* They showed this, for they knew very well that they were not sent to the priests, that these should heal them, it being no part of the priests’ functions to cure, but only to

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\* Calvin: Quamvis enim foetidam adhuc scabiem in carne suâ conspiciant, simul tamen ac jussi sunt se ostendere sacerdotibus, parere non detrectant. Adde quod nunquam, nisi fidei impulsu, profecti essent ad sacerdotes: ridiculum enim fuisset ad testandam suam munditiam, lepræ judicibus se offerre, nisi pluris illis fuisset Christi promissio, quam præsens morbi sui intuitus. Visibilem in carne suâ lepram gestant, unico tamen Christi verbo confisi mundos se profiteri non dubitant: negari igitur non potest eorum cordibus insitum fuisse aliquod fidei semen . . . Quo magis timendum est, ne et nobis contingat scintillas fidei in nobis micantes extingui.

pronounce cured; they cleansed, not in the sense of ridding the leper of his disease; but only, after this had disappeared, as restoring him with ceremonial washings and offerings to the fellowship of the congregation.

There was also here a stronger temptation to ingratitude. When they first felt and found their benefit, they were not in the immediate presence of their benefactor; more probably, already out of his sight, and some little way upon their journey;\* we know not *how* far, being only told that "*as they went,† they were cleansed;*" it was not therefore an easy and costless effort to render their thanks to Him. Some, indeed, suppose that the return of the one Samaritan, whose heart *was* stirred with a lively gratitude to his Healer, did not take place till after he had accomplished all which was commanded him; that he had been to Jerusalem—that he had offered his gift—that he had been pronounced clean—and, this his first duty accomplished, that he then returned to render thanks to the author of his benefit; the sacred narrative leaping over large spaces of time and many intermediate events for the purpose of bringing together the beginning and the end of this history.‡ But certainly the impression which the nar-

\* Calvin suggests another reason, which may have kept them away: *Ut morbi memoriam extinguerent furtim clapsi sunt.*

† We learn from Tertullian (*Adv. Mare.* iv. 35) that the Gnostic Marcion saw in this healing of the lepers by the way, this taking, upon Christ's part, of the work out of the hands of the Levitical priests, a contempt cast, and intended to be cast, by Him on the Mosaic institutions: *Hic Christum ænulum [legis] affirmat prævenientem solennia legis etiam in curatione decem leprosorum, quos tantummodo ire jussos ut se ostenderent sacerdotibus, in itinere purgavit, sine tactu jam et sine verbo, tacitâ potestate, et solâ voluntate;* and again, *Quasi legis illusor, ut in itinere curatis ostenderet nihil esse legem cum ipsis sacerdotibus.* It is needless to observe that there was no such passing of them by, since the priests' work was not to cleanse, but to pronounce clean.

‡ Calvin halts between this opinion and that which follows: *Mihi tamen magis probabile est, non nisi auditio sacerdotis judicio ad gratias agendas venisse . . . Nisi forte magis placet diuersa conjectura, simul ac mundatum se vidit, antequam testimonium expeteret a sacerdotibus, ad ipsum auctorem pio et sancto ardore correptum venisse, ut sacrificium suum a gratiarum actione inciperet.*

rative leaves is different ;—that, having advanced some very little way on their commanded journey, so little that no time would be really lost by the return, perhaps in the very village itself, they were aware of the grace which had overtaken them ; they knew themselves cleansed ; and then this one turned back in the fulness of a grateful heart to give glory to God and thanks to his great Healer and Saviour ; like the Syrian Naaman, who, delivered from the same hideous disease, came back with all his company, beseeching the man of God to take a blessing at his hands (2 Kin. v. 15) ; the residue meanwhile enduring to carry away the benefit without one grateful acknowledgment rendered unto Him who was its author and its source, and to whose feet the slightest labour would have brought them. A sin only too common ! for, as Bishop Sanderson says, with allusion to their former crying : “ We open our mouths wide till God open his hand ; but after, as if the filling of our mouths were the stopping of our throats, so are we speechless and heartless.”\*

It gives a special significance to this miracle, and explains the place which it finds in that Gospel which is eminently the Gospel for the heathen, that this thankful one should have been a Samaritan, a stranger therefore by birth to the covenants of promise, while the nine unthankful were of the seed of Abraham. It was implied in this that the Gentiles (for this Samaritan was no better) were not excluded from the kingdom of God, nay rather, might find a place in it before others who by nature and birth were children of the kingdom ; that the ingratitude of these might shut them out, while the faith of those might give to them an abundant entrance into all its blessings.

Even He who emphatically “knew what was in man,” who had already so often proved his ingratitude, seems to have marvelled at the height of the ingratitude here : for

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\* Bernard : Importuni ut accipiant, inquieti donec acceperint, ubi acceperint ingrati. Calvin : Sic inopia et esuries fidem dignit, quam occidit saturitas.

He asks, “*Were there not ten cleansed?*” or rather, “*Were not the ten cleansed—but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*” Him now He dismisses with a second and a better blessing; the earlier had reached but to the healing of his body, and he had that in common with the unthankful nine; but gratitude for a lower mercy obtains for him a higher, a blessing which is singularly his, and reaches not merely to the springs of bodily health, but to the healing of the very fountains of his spiritual being. That which the others missed, to which their bodily healing should have led them up, and would, if they had received it aright, he has obtained; for to him, and to him only, it is said, “*Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.*”\*

How aptly does the image which this history supplies set forth the condition of the faithful in this world! They too are to take Christ’s word that they will be cleansed, that in some sort they are so already (John xv. 3); for in baptism they have the pledge and promise and the initial act of it all. And this they must believe, even while they yet feel in themselves the leprous taint of sin,—must go forward in faith, being confident that in the use of his Word, and of his Sacraments, and all his appointed means of grace, slight as they may seem to meet and overcome such mighty mischiefs, they will find that health, which according to the sure word of pro-

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\* Calvin: *Servandi verbum* quidam interpres ad earnis munditiem restringunt; verum si ita est, quum vivam in hoc Samaritano fidem commendet Christus, quæri potest quomodo servati fuerint alii novem; nam eadem promiscue omnibus sanitas obtigit. Sic ergo habendum est Christum hic aliter æstimasse donum Dei quam soleant profani homines, nempe tanquam salutare paterni amoris symbolum vel pignus. Sanati fuerunt novem leprosi, sed quia Dei gratiam impie obliterant, ipsam sanitatem inficit et contaminat eorum ingratitudo, ut quam decebat utilitatem ex eâ non percipient. Sola igitur fides dona Dei nobis sanctificat, ut pura sint, et cum legitimo usu conjuncta in salutem nobis cedant . . . Servatus est suâ fide Samaritanus. Quomodo? certe non ideo tantum, quod a leprâ curatus sit (nam hoc et reliquis commune erat), sed quia in numerum filiorum Dei acceptus est, ut paterni amoris tesseram ex ejus manu acciperet.

mise is already theirs; and as they go, believing this word, using these means, they *are* healed. And for them, too, a warning is here—that they forget not the purging of their old sins (2 Pet. i. 9)—nor what those sins were, how hideous, how loathsome; in this only too like those nine, who perhaps did not return as men who would do their best to obliterate the very memory of all which once and so lately they had been. Let those who now are clean through the word spoken to them, not fail to keep in memory the times of their past anguish,—the times when everything seemed defiled to them, and they to everything; when they saw themselves as “unclean, unclean,” shut out from all holy fellowship of God and men, and cried out in their anguish, “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*” Let them see to it, that they forget not this; but let each remembrance of the absolving word which was spoken to them, with each new consciousness of a realized deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, bring them anew to the Saviour’s feet, giving glory to God by Him; lest, failing in this, their guilt prove greater than even that of these unthankful nine. For these carried away only temporal mercies unacknowledged; but we should in such a case be seeking to carry away spiritual; not, indeed, that we should succeed in so doing; since the spiritual mercy which is not evermore referred to its Author, sooner or later inevitably ceases from him who hopes on any other conditions to retain it.\*

\* Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.* 125) : Remittit nos Filius Dei ad ministerium Verbi et Sacramentorum in Ecclesiā; et quemadmodum his sanati sunt dum iverunt, et mandato Christi obtemperarunt, ita et nos dum in Ecclesiā Verbum Dei audimus, absolutione et Sacramentis utimur, vult nobis Christus peccata remittere, nos sanare, ut in cœlesti Jerusalem mundi eoram Deo compareamus . . . Omnes nati sumus filii iræ, in baptismo remittitur nobis ille reatus, sed non statim in cœlos abripimur: verum dicit nobis, Ite, ostendite vos sacerdotibus. Leve quid ut videtur injungit. Utut autem leve sit, sequitur tamen enarrabile bonum, quia is qui nobis hoc præcipit, est omnipotens Deus, qui ex minimis maxima producere potest. Cf. Augustine, *Quest. Evang.* ii. 40.

## 23. THE HEALING OF THE DAUGHTER OF THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN.

MATT. XV. 21-28; MARK vii. 24-30.

AT no time during his earthly ministry does our Lord seem to have overpassed the limits of the Holy Land; not even when He “departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.” It was only “into the borders of Tyre and Sidon,” as St. Mark expressly tells us (vii. 24), that He went; and even St. Matthew’s words need not, and certainly here do not, mean more than that He approached the confines of that heathen land.\* The general fitness of things, and more than this, his own express words on this very occasion, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” combine to make it most unlikely that He had now brought his healing presence to any other but the people of the Covenant; and, moreover, when St. Matthew speaks of the “woman of Canaan” as *coming out* of that district, or “of the same coasts,” he clearly shows that he did not intend to describe the Lord as having done more than drawn close to the skirts of that profane land.

Being there, He “entered into a house, and would have no man know it;” but as “the ointment bewrayeth itself,” so He, whose “Name is like ointment poured out,” on the present occasion\* could not be hid;” and among those attracted by its sweetness was a woman of that country,—“a woman of Canaan,” as St. Matthew terms her, “a Greek, a Syrophenician,” as St. Mark,† meaning by the first term to

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\* Kuinoel here: In partes Palæstinæ regioni Tyriorum et Sidoniorum finitimas. So Exod. xvi. 85: εἰς μέρος τῆς Φουνίκης (LXX), “to the borders of Canaan.”

† Συροφονίκισσα, Lachmann; Σύρα Φουνίκισσα, Tischendorf; and between these readings the best MSS. are divided. Συροφονίσσα is very weakly attested: it is indeed the more Greek form, yet not there-

indicate her religion, that it was not Jewish, but heathen; by the second, the stock of which she came, being even that accursed race once doomed of God to a total excision, root and branch (*Dcut. vii. 2*), but of which some branches had been spared by those first generations of Israel that should have destroyed all (*Judg. ii. 2, 3*). Everything, therefore, was against her; yet she was not hindered by that everything from drawing nigh and craving the boon that her soul longed after. She had heard of the mighty works which the Saviour of Israel had done: for already his fame had gone through all Syria; so that they brought unto Him, besides other sick, “those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and He healed them” (*Matt. iv. 24*). And she has a boon to ask for her daughter, say rather for herself; so entirely has she made her daughter’s misery her own: “*Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil;*” as on a later occasion the father of the lunatic child, “*Have compassion on us, and help us*” (*Mark ix. 22*).

But she finds Him very different from that which report had described Him to her. That had spoken of Him as merciful and gracious, not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax, inviting every weary and afflicted soul to draw nigh and find rest with Him. He who of Himself anticipated the needs of others, withdrew Himself from hers; “*He answered her not a word.*” In the language of Chrysostom, “The Word has no word; the fountain is sealed; the physician withdraws his remedies;” until at last the disciples, wearied out with her long entreaties, and to all appearance more merciful than their Lord, themselves “*came and besought Him, saying, Send her away.*” Yet was there in truth a worm of selfishness at the root of this compassion

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fore here to be preferred, but rather the contrary. See a learned note by Grotius, on *Matt. xv. 22*. This woman’s name, according to the *Clementine Homilies* (ii. 19), was Justa, where legends of her later life, and her passage from heathenism to Judaism, are to be found.

of theirs, which showed itself as livelier than their Lord's; for why is He to satisfy her and dismiss her? "*for she crieth after us;*" she is making a scene; she is drawing on them unwelcome observation. Theirs is that heartless granting of a request, whereof all are conscious; when it is granted out of no love to the suppliant, but to leave undisturbed the peace and selfish ease of him from whom at length it is extorted,—a granting such as his who gave, but gave saying, "*lest by her continual coming she weary me*" (Luke xviii. 5). Here, as so often, behind a seeming severity lurks the real love, while under the mask of greater easiness selfishness lies hid.

These intercessors meet with no better fortune than the suppliant herself; and Christ stops their mouth with words which might appear to set the seal of hopelessness on her suit: "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (cf. Matt. x. 5, 6). But in what sense was this true? All prophecy which went before declared that in Him, the promised Seed, not one nation only, but all nations of the earth, should be blest: He Himself declared, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" (John x. 16). It has happened, indeed, before now with the founders of false religions that, as success beckoned them on, the circle of their vision has widened; and they who meant at first but to give a faith to their tribe or nation, have aspired at last to give one to the world. But here all must have been always known; the world-embracing reach of his faith was contemplated by Christ from the beginning. In what sense then, and under what limitations, could it be said with truth that He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel only? Clearly it must be in his own personal ministry.\* That, for wise purposes in

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\* Augustine (*Serm. lxxvii. 2*): *Hic verborum istorum oritur quaestio: Unde nos ad ovile Christi de gentibus venimus, si non est missus nisi ad oves quae perierunt dominus Israel?* Quid sibi vult hujus secreti tam alta dispensatio, ut cum Dominus sciret quare veniret, uti-

the counsels of God, was to be confined to his own nation ; and every departure from this, the prevailing rule of his ministry, was, and was clearly marked as, an exception. Here and there, indeed, there were preludes of the larger mercy which was behind,\* first drops of that gracious shower which should one day water the whole earth. Before, however, the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy, He must first be “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8, 9). It was only as it were by a rebound from them that the grace was to light upon the heathen world ; while yet that issue, which seemed thus accidental, was laid deep in the deepest counsels of God (Acts xiii. 44-49; Rom. xi.). In the form of Christ’s reply, as St. Mark gives it, “*Let the children first be filled,*” the refusal does not appear so absolute and final, and a glimpse appears of the manner in which the blessing would pass on to others, when as many of these, “*the children,*” as would, have accepted it. But there, too, the present repulse is absolute. The time is not yet ; others intermeddle not with the meal, till the children have had enough.

The woman hears the repulse, which the disciples who had ventured to plead for her receive ; but is not daunted or disheartened thereby. Hitherto she had been crying after the Lord, and at a distance ; but now, instead of being put further still, “*came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me.*” On this He breaks the silence which hitherto He has maintained towards her ; but it is with an answer more uncomfortable than was even the silence itself : “*He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread,† and to*

que ut Ecclesiam haberet in omnibus Gentibus, non se missum dixerit, nisi ad oves quae perierunt domūs Israel ? Intelligimus ergo præsentiam corporis sui, nativitatem suam, exhibitionem miraculorum, virtutemque resurrectionis in illo populo eum ostendere debuisse. Jerome (*Comm. in Matt. in loc.*) : Perfectam salutem gentium passionis et resurrectionis temporis reservabat.

\* Calvin : Præludia quædam dare voluit communis misericordiæ.

† Maldonatus : Habent canes panem suum minus delicatum, quam

*cast it to dogs.*" "*The children*" are, of course, the Jews, "the children of the kingdom" (cf. Matt. viii. 12). He who spoke so sharply *to* them, speaks thus honourably *of* them; nor is there any contradiction in this: for here He is speaking of the position which God has given them in his kingdom; there, of the manner in which they have realized that position. On the other hand, extreme contempt was involved in the title of "*dog*"\* given to any one, the nobler characteristics of the animal, although by no means unknown to antiquity, being never brought out in Scripture (see Deut. xxiii. 18; Job xxx. 1; 1 Sam. xvii. 43; xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. iii. 8; ix. 8; xvi. 9; 2 Kin. viii. 13; Matt. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 15).

There are very few for whom this would not have been enough; who, even if they had persevered thus far, would not now at length have turned away in anger or despair. Not so, however, this heathen woman; she, like the centurion, and under still more unfavourable circumstances than his, was mighty in faith; and from the very word which seemed to make most against her, draws with the ready wit of faith an argument in her own behalf. She entangles the Lord, Himself most willing thus to be so entangled, in his

filii; res naturales, Sol, Luna, pluvia, et cetera idem genus canum, id est Gentilium, panis sunt; quæ providentiâ quidem Dei, sed generali minusque accuratâ dispensantur, et omnibus in commune, sicut porcis glandes, projiciuntur: Evangelica gratia, quæ supra naturam est, panis est filiorum non projiciendus temere, sed majore consilio rationeque distribuendus.

\* Many, as Maldonatus, assume that there is yet a further aggravation of the contempt in the *κυνάπιος* (the Vulgate, catellis), not even dogs, but whelps. Yet rather I should be inclined to say with Olshausen that there is in the diminutive a slight mitigation of the exceeding sharpness of the words; yet not so but that they remain most severe and cutting still. Calvin brings out well the force of the *βαλεῖν*: *Projiciendi* verbo utitur significando non bene locari, quod Ecclesiæ Dei ablatum profanis hominibus vulgatur. Clarius exprimitur consilium Christi apud Marcum vii. 27, ubi habetur, Sine prius saturari filios. Nam Cananæam admonet præpostere facere, quæ velut in mediâ cœnâ in mensam involat.

own speech ; she takes the sword out of his own hand, with which to overcome Him :\* “ *Truth, Lord : yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*” Upon these words Luther, who has dwelt on all the circumstances of this little history with a peculiar love, and is never weary of extolling the mighty faith of this woman, exclaims, “ Was not that a master-stroke ? she snares Christ in his own words.” And oftentimes he sets this Canaanitish woman before troubled and fainting hearts, that they may learn from her how to wring a Yea from God’s Nay; or, rather, how to hear the deep-hidden Yea, which many times lurks under his seeming Nay. “ Like her, thou must give God right in all He says against thee, and yet must not stand off from praying, till thou overcomest as she overcame, till thou hast turned the very charges made against thee into arguments and proofs of thy need, till thou too hast taken Christ in his own words.”

Our translation of the woman’s answer is not, however, altogether satisfactory. For, indeed, she accepts the Lord’s declaration, not immediately to make exception against the conclusion which He draws from it, but to show how *in that very declaration* is involved the granting of her petition.†

\* Corn. a Lapide : Christum suis verbis irretit, comprehendit, et capit Rationem contra se factam in ipsum leniter retorquet.

† There is nothing adversative in *καὶ γάρ*—et enim (see Passow), which would justify the “ *yet* ” of our Version, or the “ nevertheless ” of Tyndale’s. Wiclit’s, Crammer’s, the Genevese and Rhemish versions have the right translation ; thus the Genevese : “ Truth, Lord, *for indeed* the whelps eat of the crumbs ; ” in this following the Vulgate : Etiam, Domine, *nam et* catelli edunt. So De Wette : Ja, Herr ! denn es essen ja die Hunde. Maldonatus, always acute, and with merits as an interpreter, which, setting apart his bitter polemical spirit, deserve the highest recognition, has exactly caught the meaning of her reply : *Hoc est quod volo, me esse canem, nam et catelli comedunt de micis quae cadunt de mensa dominorum suorum.* The “ *crumbs* ” are something more than that which should accidentally fall from the table : for it was the custom during eating to use, instead of a napkin, the soft white parts of the bread (*ἀπομαγδαλία*), which were afterwards thrown to the dogs ; Enstathius : *Eis ὁ τὰς χεῖρας ἀπομαγδάλου μένει, εἴτα κυσὶν ἔβαλλον* (see Becker, *Charikles*, vol. i. p. 431).

"Saidest Thou *dogs*? it is well; I accept the title and the place; for the dogs *have* a portion of the meal,—not the first, not the children's portion, but a portion still,—the crumbs which fall from the masters' table. In this very putting of the case, Thou bringest us heathen, Thou bringest *me*, within the circle of the blessings which God, the great householder, is ever dispensing to his family. We also belong to his household, though we occupy but the lowest place in it. According to thine own showing, I am not wholly an alien, and therefore I will abide by this name, and will claim all which in it is included." By the "*masters*" she does not intend the Jews, which is Chrysostom's mistake; for thus the whole image would be deranged and disturbed; they are "*the children*;" but the great Heavenly householder. She uses the plural, "*masters*," to correspond to the plural, "*dogs*," which Christ had used just before; compare "*sons*" to correspond with "*kings*" at Matt. xvii. 26; while yet it is the one Son only, the Only-begotten of the Father, who is intended there.\* He who fills all things living with plentiousness spreads a table for all flesh; and all that depend on Him are satisfied from it, each in his own order and place, the children at the table, and the dogs beneath it. There lies in her statement something like the Prodigal's petition, "Make me as one of thy hired servants,"—a recognition of diverse relations, some closer, some more distant, in which divers persons stand to God,—yet all blest, who, whether in a nearer or remoter station, receive their meat from Him.

She has conquered at last. She, who before heard only those words of a seeming contempt, now hears words of a most gracious commendation,—words whose like are addressed but to one other in all the Gospel history: "*O woman, great is thy faith!*" He who showed at first as though He would have denied her the smallest boon, now opens to her

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\* Maldonatus: Loquitur pluraliter propter canes, quorum suum quisque dominum habet.

the full treasure-house of his grace, and bids her to help herself, to carry away what she will: "*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*" He had shown to her for a while, as Joseph showed to his brethren, the aspect of severity; but, like Joseph, He could not maintain it long;—or rather He would not maintain it an instant longer than it was needful, and after that word of hers, that mighty word of an undaunted faith, it was needful no more: "*For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*"

Like the centurion at Capernaum (Matt. viii. 13), like the nobleman at Cana (John iv. 53), she made proof that his word was as potent, spoken far off as near. She offered in her faith a channel of communication between her distant child and Christ. With one hand of that faith she laid hold on Him in whom all healing grace was stored, with the other on her suffering daughter,—thus herself a living conductor by which the power of Christ might run, like an electric flash, from Him to the object of her love. "*And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed,*" weak and exhausted, as these last words would imply, from the paroxysms of the spirit's going out;—unless, indeed, they indicate that she was now taking that quiet rest, which hitherto the evil spirit had not allowed. It will then answer so to the "clothed and in his right mind" (Luke viii. 35) of another who had been similarly tormented.

But the interesting question remains, *Why* this bitterness was not spared her, *why* the Lord should have presented Himself under so different an aspect to her, and to most other suppliants? Sometimes He anticipated their needs, "*Wilt thou be made whole?*" (John v. 6); or if not so, He who was waiting to be gracious required not to be twice asked for his blessings. Why was it that in this case, to use the words of an old divine, Christ "*stayed long, wrestling with her faith, and shaking and trying whether it were fast-rooted*" or no? Doubtless because He knew that it was a

faith which would stand the proof, and that she would come out victorious from this sore trial ; and not only so, but with a stronger, mightier, purer faith than if she had borne away her blessing merely for the asking. Now she has learned, as then she never could have learned, "that men ought always to pray and not to faint;" that when God delays a boon, He does not therefore deny it. She has learned the lesson which Moses must have learned, when "the Lord met him, and sought to kill him" (Exod. iv. 24); she has won the strength which Jacob won from his night-long wrestling with the Angel. There is, indeed, a remarkable resemblance between this history and that of Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 24-32). There, as here, we note the same persevering struggle on the one side, the same persevering refusal on the other ; there, as here, the stronger is at last overcome by the weaker. God Himself yields to the might of faith and prayer ; for a later prophet, interpreting that mysterious struggle, tells us the weapons which the patriarch wielded : "He wept and made supplication unto Him," connecting with this the fact that "he had power over the Angel, and prevailed" (Hos. xii. 3, 4). The two histories, indeed, only stand out in their full resemblance, when we keep in mind that the Angel there, the Angel of the Covenant, was no other than that Word, who, now incarnate,\* "blest" this woman at last, as He had blessed at length Jacob at Peniel,—in each case so rewarding a faith which had said, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me."

Yet, when we thus speak of man overcoming God, we must never, of course, for an instant lose sight of this, that the power whereby he overcomes the resistance of God, is itself a power supplied by God. All that is man's is the faith, or the emptiness of self, with the hunger after God, which enables him to appropriate and make so largely his own the

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\* This has been doubted by some ; but see the younger Vitringa, *Diss. de Luctâ Jacobi*, p. 18, seq., in his *Diss. Sac.*; and Deyling, *Oßss. Sac.* p. 827, seq.

fulness and power of God; so that here also that word comes true, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Thus when St. Paul (Col. i. 29) speaks of himself under an image which rested originally on Jacob's struggle, if there was not a direct allusion to it in the Apostle's mind, as *striving* for the Colossians, striving,\* that is, with God in prayer (see iv. 12), he immediately adds, "according to *his* working, which worketh in me mightily."

We may observe, in conclusion, that we have three ascending degrees of faith, as it manifests itself in the breaking through hindrances which would keep from Christ, in the paralytic (Mark ii. 4); in the blind man at Jericho (Mark x. 48); and in this woman of Canaan. The paralytic broke through the outward hindrances, the obstacles of things merely external; blind Bartimæus through the hindrances opposed by his fellow-men; but this woman, more heroically than all, through apparent hindrances even from Christ Himself. These, in their seeming weakness, were three mighty ones, not of David, but of David's Lord and Son, who broke through opposing hosts, until they could draw living water from wells of salvation (2 Sam. xxiii. 16).

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\* Ἀγωνίζομενος: cf. Col. ii. 1, where Grotius says rightly, Per *ἀγῶνα* intelligit non sollicititudinem tantum, sed preces assiduas.

## 24. THE HEALING OF ONE DEAF AND DUMB.

MARK vii. 31-37.

**S**T. MATTHEW tells us in general terms that when the Lord had returned from those coasts of Tyre and Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, “great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed,\* and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet, and He healed them” (xv. 30). Out of this number of cures St. Mark selects one to relate more in detail, and this, no doubt, because it was signalized by some circumstances not usual in other like cases of healing. “*They bring unto Him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech,*” one who, if he was not altogether dumb, was yet incapable of making any articulate sounds.† His case differs, apparently, from that of

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\* Κυλλός, properly, crippled or maimed *in the hand*, as Jerome (in *Ioc.*) observes: Quomodo claudus dicitur, qui uno claudicat pede; sic κυλλός appellatur, qui unam manum debilem habet. Nos proprietatem huius verbi non habemus. We are equally without a single word which is its equivalent. At Matt. xviii. 8 it is evidently “maimed of the hand,” but does not here mean so much; for though, of course, it lay in the power of Christ to supply a lost limb, yet we nowhere meet any miracle of this kind; neither should we expect to meet such; for He was come now, a Redeemer, that is a setter free of man in his body and in his soul from alien powers which held him in bondage—a Redeemer, but not a Creator. Even in his miracles which approach nearest to creation, He ever assumes a substratum on which to work; water, to turn into wine; bread, to multiply by his power; and in man’s case we may presume the same. It is no limitation of this divine power of Christ, to suppose that it had thus a law according to which it wrought, and beyond which it did not extend; for this law is only the law of infinite fitness, which it received from itself.

† Some make μογιλάλος here to signify mute, chiefly on account of the ἀλάλους of ver. 37; and they refer to Isai. xxxv. 6 (LXX), τραχὴ δὲ ἔσται γλώσσα μογιλάλων, in proof; as also to Exod. iv. 11, where, though not the Septuagint, yet the three other Greek translations use this word in the sense of dumb. Yet the ἐλάλει ὁρθῶς of ver. 35 makes it to me far more probable that the meaning which the derivation of the word more naturally suggests, and our translation has given, is the true. He was βραδύγλωσσος, ἀγκυλόγλωσσος, balbutiens

the dumb man mentioned Matt. ix. 32 ; for while that man's evil is traced up distinctly and directly to a spiritual source, nothing of the kind is intimated here, nor are we, as Theophylact suggests, to presume such. Him his friends now brought to the great Healer, "*and they beseech Him to put his hand upon him.*" But it is not exactly in this way that He will heal him.

It has been already observed, that there must lie a deep meaning in all the variations which mark the different healings of different sick and afflicted, a wisdom of God ordering all the circumstances of each particular cure. Were we acquainted as accurately as He who "knew what was in man," with the spiritual condition of each who was brought within the circle of his grace, we should then perfectly understand why one was healed in the crowd, another led out of the city ere the work of restoration was commenced ; why for one a word effected a cure, for another a touch, while a third was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam ere "he came seeing ;" why for this one the process of restoration was instantaneous, while another saw at first "men as trees, walking." We are not for an instant to suppose in cures gradually accomplished any restraint on the power of the Lord, save such as He willingly imposed on Himself,—and this, doubtless, in each case having reference to, and being explicable by, the moral and spiritual state of the person who was passing under his hands. It is true that our ignorance prevents us from at once and in every case discerning "the manifold wisdom" which ordered each of his proceedings, but we are not less sure that this wisdom ordered them all.\*

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—that is, he could make no intelligible sounds; but was not absolutely dumb; cf. Isai. xxxii. 4 (LXX) : *αἱ γλῶσσαι αἱ ψελλίζονται.*

\* Maldonatus: *Videtur etiam voluisse Christus non semper aequaliter suam divinitatem potentiamque declarare, quod non semper, etiamsi nos causa lateat, convenire judicaret. Aliquando solo verbo daemones ejicit, mortuos exsuscitat, ostendens se omnino esse Deum; aliquando tactu, salivâ, luto, sanat aegrotos, accommodans quodammodo potentiam suam ad modum agendi causarum naturalium, et ad sensum et consuetudinem hominum.*

On the present occasion He first "*took him aside from the multitude,*" whom He would heal; compare Mark viii. 23: "He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town." But with what intent does He isolate him thus? The Greek Fathers generally reply, for the avoiding of all show and ostentation. But this cannot be, since of all the miracles which He did, we have only two in which any such withdrawal is recorded. Shall we say then that there was show and ostentation in all the others? It is not much better to answer, with Calvin, that He might pray with greater freedom.\* He, whose life was altogether prayer, needed not solitude for this. His purpose was, rather, that apart from the tumult and interruptions of the crowd, in solitude and silence, the man might be more receptive of deep and lasting impressions; even as the same Lord does now oftentimes lead a soul apart, sets it in the solitude of a sick chamber, or in loneliness of spirit, or takes away from it earthly companions and friends, when He would speak with it, and heal it. He takes it aside, as He took this deaf and dumb out of the multitude, that in the hush of the world's din it may listen to Him; as on a greater scale He took his elect people aside into the wilderness, when He would first open their spiritual ear, and deliver unto them his law.

Having this done, Christ "*put his finger into his ears, and He spit and touched his tongue.*" These are symbolic actions, which it is easy to see why He should have employed in the case of one afflicted as this man was;—almost all other avenues of communication, save by sight and feeling, were of necessity closed. Christ by these signs would awaken his faith, and stir up in him the lively expectation of a blessing. The fingers are put into the ears as to bore them, to pierce through the obstacles which hindered sounds from reaching the seat of hearing. This was the fountain-evil; he did not *speak* plainly, because he did not *hear*; this defect, therefore,

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\* Ut precandi ardorem liberius effundat.

is mentioned as being first removed.\* Then, as often through excessive drought the tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth, the Lord gives here, in what next He does, the sign of the removal of this evil, of the unloosing of the tongue. And, at the same time, the healing virtue He shows to reside in his own body; He looks not for it from any other quarter; but with the moisture of his own mouth upon his finger touched the tongue which He would release from the bands which held it fast. It is not for its medicinal virtue that use is made of this, but as the apt symbol of a power residing in, and going forth from, his body.†

St. Mark, abounding as he does in graphic touches, reproducing before our eyes each scene which he narrates, tells us of the Lord, how this doing, "*and looking up to heaven, He sighed.*" He has further preserved for us the very word which He spake, in the very language in which He spake it; He "*saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.*" The "*looking up to heaven*" was a claiming of the divine help; or rather, since the fulness of divine power abode permanently in Him, and not by fitful visitation as in others, an acknowledgment of his oneness with the Father, and that He did no other things save those which He saw the Father do (cf. Matt. xiv. 19; John xi. 41, 42). Some explain the words "*He sighed,*" or "*He groaned,*" which are the words in the Rhemish version, as the deep voice of prayer in which He was at the moment engaged; but rather we suppose that this poor helpless creature now brought before Him, this living proof of the wreck which sin had brought about, of the malice of the devil in deforming the fair features of God's original

\* Grotius: Sæpe Christus externo aliquo signo inadspectabilem efficaciam velut spectandam exhibebat. Ita digitis in aures immissis, irrigatâque linguâ testatum fecit se eum esse ejus vi clausi meatus quasi perterebrarentur, et lingua palato adhærescens motum recuperaret.

† Grotius: Nec alio hoc referendum mihi videtur quam quo superiora, ut hoc quoque in'icio ostenderetur ab ipso Jesu prodiisse hanc salutiferam virtutem, cum nihil admotum esset affecto corporei, præter ipsa quæ ipsius Jesu erant propria.

creation, then wrung that groan from his heart. He that always felt, was yet now in his human soul touched with a liveliest sense of the miseries of the race of man.\* Thus on another still greater occasion, “He groaned in the spirit and was troubled” (John xi. 33), with a trouble which had in like manner its source in the thought of the desolation which sin and death had effected. As there the mourning hearts which were before Him were but a sampler of the mourners of all times and all places, so was this poor man of all the variously afflicted and greatly suffering children of Adam.† In the preservation of the actual Aramaic “*Ephphatha*,” which Christ spoke, as in the “*Talitha cumi*” of Mark v. 14,‡ we recognize the narrative of an eye and ear-witness, St. Peter, no doubt, from whom the Evangelist had his account, and on whose memory the words of power, which opened the ears, and loosed the tongue, and raised the dead, had indelibly impressed themselves. §

\* Chrysostom (in Cramer, *Catena*) : Τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν ἔλεων εἰς ποῖαν ταπείνωσιν ἥγαγεν ταύτην ὁ τε μισόκαλος διάβολος, καὶ ἡ τῶν πρωτοπλάστων ἀπροσέξτα.

† In the exquisite poem in *The Christian Year* which these words have suggested, this sigh is understood rather as the sigh of one who looked onward to all the deeper spiritual evils of humanity, which would so often wilfully resist even *his* power of healing :

The deaf may hear the Saviour's voice,  
The fetter'd tongue its chain may break ;  
But the deaf heart, the dumb by choice,  
The laggard soul that will not wake,  
The guilt that scorns to be forgiven ;—  
These baffle even the spells of Heaven ;  
In thought of these his brows benign,  
Not even in healing, cloudless shine.

‡ It is quite in St. Mark's manner to give the actual Aramaic words which Christ used, but adding in each case their interpretation (iii. 17; v. 41; vii. 11; xiv. 36; xv. 34; cf. x. 46; xv. 22).

§ Grotius: *Haec autem vox Ephphatha simul cum salivâ et tactu aurium ac linguae ex hoc Christi facto ad Baptismi ritus postea translata sunt, ut significaretur non minus interna mentis impedimenta tolli per Spiritum Christi, quam in isto homine sublata fuerant sensuum impedimenta.* Nam et eor dicitur διαροήσθαι, Acts xvi. 14. Imo et cordi aures tribuuntur. The rite to which Grotius refers is one that found place in the Latin Church alone, as it survives in that of

The injunction, “*He charged them that they should tell no man,*” implies that the friends of this afflicted man had accompanied or followed Jesus out of the crowd, and having been witnesses of the cure, were now included with him in the same prohibition of divulging what had been done. On the reasons which induced the Lord so often to give this charge of silence something has been said already. On this, as on other occasions (see Matt. ix. 31; Mark i. 44, 45), the charge is nothing regarded by those on whom it is laid; “*the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.*” The exclamation in which men’s surprise and admiration finds utterance, “*He hath done all things well,*” reminds us of the words of the first creation (Gen. i. 31\*), upon which we are thus not unsuitably thrown back, for Christ’s work is in the truest sense “a new creation.” The concluding notice of St. Matthew, “*they glorified the God of Israel,*” implies that of those present a great number were heathens, as we should naturally expect in this half-hellenized region of Decapolis, and that these, beholding the mighty works which were done, confessed that the God who had chosen Israel was above all gods.

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Rome. The practice of the priest’s touching the nostrils and ears of the child or catechumen about to be baptized, with moisture from his mouth, had its origin here; as is plainly indicated by the word *Epheta*, which he used at the same time. Ambrose, addressing the catechumens, speaks thus (*De Init. 1*): Aperite igitur aures, et bonum odorem vitae aeternae inhalatum vobis munere sacramentorum carpite, quod vobis significavimus, cum *apertio*nis celebrantes mysterium diceremus *Epheta*, quod est, Adaperire; ut venturus unusquisque ad gratiam, quid interrogaretur cognosceret, quid responderet, meminisse deberet. Cf. the work, *De Sacram.* i. 1, attributed to him.

\* Here καλῶς πάντα πεπόίηκε: there πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησε, καλὰ λάν.

## 25. THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FOUR THOUSAND.

MATT. XV. 32-39; MARK VIII. 1-9.

ALMOST every thing which might have been said upon this miracle, the preceding one of the same nature has anticipated already. Whether this was wrought nearly in the same locality, namely, in the desert country belonging to Bethsaida,\* and not rather on the western, as the former on the eastern, side of the lake, has been sometimes debated. On the whole it is most probable that it was wrought nearly on the same spot; for thither the narrative of St. Mark appears to have brought the Lord. Leaving the coasts of Tyre and Sidon after the healing of the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, He is said to have again reached the sea of Galilee, and this through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis (vii. 31). But all the cities of the Decapolis save one lay beyond Jordan, and on the eastern side of the lake; this notice therefore places Him on the same side also. Not less does the fact that immediately after the miracle He took ship and came to the region of Magdala (Matt. xv. 39), since Magdala was certainly on the western side, and his taking ship was more probably to cross the lake than to coast along its shores.†

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\* Not Bethsaida, "the city of Andrew and Peter," but the Bethsaida already mentioned, p. 265.

† St. Mark, who for Magdala substitutes Dalmanutha, does not help us here, as there are no further traces of this place; yet that it was on the western side of the lake may be concluded from the fact that Christ's leaving it and crossing the lake is described as a departing εἰς τὸ πέραν, an expression in the N. T. applied almost exclusively to the country east of the lake and of Jordan. In some maps, in that for instance which Lightfoot gives, Magdala is placed at the S.E. of the lake; but this is a mistake, and does not agree with passages which he himself quotes from Jewish writers (*Chorograph.* 76), which all go to show that it was close to Tiberias. It is most probably the modern

With many points of likeness, there are also some points of unlikeness in the two miracles. Here the people had continued with the Lord three days, but on the former occasion nothing of the kind is noted ; the provision too is somewhat larger, seven loaves and a few fishes, instead of five loaves and two fishes ; as the number fed is somewhat smaller, four thousand now instead of the five thousand then ; and the remaining fragments in this case fill but seven baskets, while in the former they had filled twelve.\* Of course the work, considered as a miraculous putting forth of the power of the Lord, in each case remains exactly the same.

At first it excites some surprise that the disciples, with that other miracle fresh in their memories, should now have been as much at a loss how the multitude should be fed as they were before. Yet this surprise rises out of our ignorance

El-Madschedel, lying on the S.W. of the lake, and in the neighbourhood of the city just named. So Greswell, *Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 324; Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Magdala; Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, vol. iii. p. 278.

\* It is remarkable that all four Evangelists, in narrating the first miracle, agree in using the term *κοφίνους* to describe the baskets which were filled with the remaining fragments, while the two that relate the second equally agree therein in using the term *σπυρίδας*. And that this variation was not accidental, but that there was some difference, is clear from our Lord's after words; when referring to the two miracles, He preserves the distinction, asking his disciples how many *κοφίνους* on the first occasion they gathered up; how many *σπυρίδας* on the last (Matt. xvi. 9, 10; Mark viii. 19, 20). What the distinction was, is more difficult to say. The derivation of *κόφινος* from *κόπτω* (= ἄγγειον πλεκτόν, Suidas), and *σπυρίς* from *σπέρα*, does not help us, as each points to the baskets being of wicker-work. See, however, another derivation of *σπυρίς* in Greswell, *Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 358, and the distinction which he seeks to draw from it. Why the people, or at least the Apostles, should have been provided with the one or the other has been variously explained. Some say, to carry their own provisions with them, while they were travelling through a polluted land, such as Samaria. Greswell rather supposes, that they might sleep in them, so long as they were compelled to lodge *sub dio*; and quotes Juvenal (*Sat.* iii. 13): *Judæis, quorum cophinus scenumque supplex.* It appears from Acts ix. 25 that the *σπυρίς* might be of size sufficient to contain a man : compare Blunt, *Undesigned Coincidences*, 1847, p. 271.

of man's heart, of our own heart, and of the deep root of unbelief which is there. It is evermore thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten ;\* the mighty interpositions of God's hand in former passages of men's lives fall out of their memories ; each new difficulty appears insurmountable ; as one from which there is no extrication ; at each recurring necessity it seems as though the wonders of God's grace are exhausted and have come to an end. God may have divided the Red Sea for Israel, yet no sooner are they on the other side, than because there is no water to drink, they murmur against Moses, and count that they must perish for thirst, crying, "Is the Lord among us, or not" (Exod. xvii. 1-7) ? or, to adduce a still nearer parallel, once already the Lord had covered the camp with quails (Exod. xvi. 13), yet for all this even Moses himself cannot believe that He will provide flesh for all that multitude (Num. xi. 21, 22). It is only the man of a full-formed faith, a faith such as Apostles themselves at this time did not possess, who argues from the past to the future, and truly derives confidence from God's former dealings of faithfulness and love (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 31-37 ; 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 8).

Nothing but a strange unacquaintance with the heart of man could have made any find here an evidence of the inaccuracy and general untrustworthiness of the records of our Lord's life ; arguing, as some do, that the disciples, with the experience of one miracle of this kind, *could not* on a second occasion have been perplexed how the wants of the multitude should be supplied ; that we have here therefore evidence of a loose tradition, which has told the same event twice over. Or, looking at the matter from another point of view, might

\* Calvin : *Quia autem similis quotidie nobis obrepit torpor, eo magis cavendum est ne unquam distrahantur mentes nostræ a reputandis Dei beneficiis, ut præteriti temporis experientia in futurum idem nos sperare doceat, quod jam semel vel sæpius largitus est Deus.*

it not easily have happened that the disciples, perfectly remembering how their Master had once spread a table in the wilderness, and fully persuaded that He could do it again, may yet very well have doubted whether He would choose a second time to put forth his creative might;—whether there was in these present multitudes that spiritual hunger, which was worthy of being met and rewarded by this interposition of divine power; whether they too were seeking the kingdom of heaven, and were thus worthy to have all other things, those also which pertain to this lower life, to the supply of their present needs, added unto them.\* But so it was; and the same hand which fed the five thousand before, fed the four thousand now.

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\* It is at least an ingenious allegory which Augustine proposes, namely that these two miracles respectively set forth Christ's communicating of Himself to the Jew and to the Gentile; that as the first is a parable of the Jewish people finding in Him the satisfaction of their spiritual need, so this second, in which the people came from far, even from the far country of idols, is a parable of the Gentile world. The details of his application may not be of any very great value; but the perplexity of the Apostles here concerning the supply of the new needs, notwithstanding all that they had already witnessed, will then exactly answer to the slowness with which they themselves, as the ministers of the new Kingdom, did recognize that Christ was as freely given to, and was as truly the portion of, the Gentile as the Jew. This sermon the Benedictine Edd. relegate to the *Appendix* (*Serm. lxxxi.*), but the passage about Eutyches may easily be, indeed bears witness of being, an interpolation; and the rest is so entirely in Augustine's manner, that I have not hesitated to quote it as his. Hilary had before him suggested the same: *Sicut autem illa turba quam prius pavit, Judaicæ credentium convenit turbæ, ita haec populo gentium comparatur.*

## 26. THE OPENING THE EYES OF ONE BLIND AT BETHSAIDA.

MARK viii. 22-26.

WE have here another miracle peculiar to St. Mark. Its most important features have been treated of elsewhere. As the Lord took that other sufferer, of whom also St. Mark alone keeps a record, “aside from the multitude” (vii. 33), even so “*He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town;*”\* and in the same way with the moisture from his own mouth He effects the cure. On both these matters the reader is referred to what there has been already said. The Lord, as was so often his custom, veiling more or less the miraculous in the miracle, links on His power to forms already in use among men; working through these forms something higher than they could have produced, and clothing the supernatural in the forms of the natural. Thus did He, when He bade his disciples to anoint the sick with oil,—one of the most esteemed helps for healing in the East (Mark vi. 13; Jam. v. 14). Not the oil, but his word, was to heal; yet without the oil the disciples might have found it too hard to believe in the power which they were exerting,—those who through their faith should be healed, to believe in the power which should heal them. So the figs laid on Hezekiah’s boil were indeed the very remedy which a physician with only natural appliances at command would have used (Isai. xxxviii. 22; cf. 2 Kin. ii. 20, 21); yet now, hiding itself behind this nature, clothing itself in the forms of this nature, an effectual work of preternatural healing went forward.

The only remaining circumstance which distinguishes this

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\* Bengel gives this as the reason why the Lord led him out into the country: *Cæco visum recuperanti lætior erat aspectus cœli et operum divinorum in naturâ, quam operum humanorum in pago.*

miracle is the progressiveness of the cure. This, it is true, is not itself without analogies in other cures, as in that of the man blind from his birth, who only after he had been to wash in Siloam, “came seeing” (John ix. 7); yet the steps of the progress are marked more plainly here than in any other instance. For, first, after the Lord “had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up, and said, I see men, as trees, walking;” certain moving forms about him, but without the power of discerning their shape or magnitude,—trees he should have accounted them from their height, and men from their motion.\* But the good Physician leaves not his work unfinished: “After that He put his hands again upon his eyes,† and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.”

Chrysostom and others find the reasons for this only gradual cure, in the imperfection of this blind man’s faith. Evidence of this they see in the fact, that while others in like case cried with their own voices to Jesus for the opening of their eyes, this man was brought to Him by others, himself perhaps scarcely expecting a benefit. The gracious Lord, then, who would not reject, but who could as little cure him so long as there was on his part this desperation of healing, gave to him a glimpse of the blessing, that He might kindle in him a longing for the fulness of it, that He might present to him Himself as the opener of the blind eyes. To the rest of the world, this gradual healing is a testimony of the free-

\* In the very interesting account which Cheselden has given (*Anatomy*, p. 301, London, 1768) of the feelings of a child, who having been blind from his birth, was enabled to see, a curious confirmation of the truthfulness of this narrative occurs: “When he first saw, he knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude; but being told what things were, whose forms he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe, that he might know them again.”

† Chemnitz (*Harm. Evang.* 84): *Manus imponit ut ostendat carnem suam esse instrumentum per quod et cum quo ipse ὁ Λόγος. æternus omnia opera vivificationis perficiat.*

ness of God's grace, which is linked to no single way of manifestation, but works in divers manners, sometimes accomplishing only little by little what at other times it brings about in a moment.\* And certainly no symbol more suitable could be found of the steps by which He who is "the Light of the world" makes oftentimes the souls that come to Him partakers of the illumination of his grace. Not all at once are the old errors and the old confusions put to flight; not all at once do they see clearly: for a while there are many remains of their old blindness, much which for a season still hinders their vision; they see men but as trees, walking. Yet in good time Christ completes the work which He has begun; He who was "the author" is also "the finisher of their faith;" He lays his hands on them anew, and they see every man clearly.†

*"And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."* The first of these commands seems to contain, and in fact does contain, the second; for if he did not "*go into the town,*" it is certain he could not "*tell it to any in the town;*" but St. Mark ever loves emphatic statements of this kind, and by repetition to secure a strong impression on the minds of his readers.

\* Calvin: Paulatim cæco visum restitut: quod ideo factum esse probubile est, ut documentum in hoc homine statueret liberæ sua dispensationis, nec se astrictum esse ad certam normam, quin hoc vel illo modo virtutem suam proferret. Oculos ergo cæci non statim ita illuminat ut officio suo fungantur, sed obseurum illis confusumque intuitum instillat: deinde alterâ manuum impositione integrum aciem illis reddit. Ita gratia Christi, quæ in alios repente effusa prius erat, quasi guttatum defluxit in hunc hominem.

† Bede: Quem uno verbo totum simul curare poterat, paulatim curat, ut magnitudinem humanæ cæcitatatis ostendat, quæ vix et quasi per gradus ad lucem redeat, et gratiam suam nobis indicet, per quam singula perfectionis incrementa adjuvat.

## 27. THE HEALING OF THE LUNATIC CHILD.

MATT. xvii. 14-21; MARK ix. 14-29; LUKE ix. 37-42.

THE old adversaries of our Lord, the Scribes, had taken advantage of his absence on the Mount of Transfiguration, to win a momentary triumph, or at least what seemed such, over those of his disciples whom He had left behind Him. These had undertaken to cast out an evil spirit of a peculiar malignity, and had proved unequal to the task ; “*they could not*”—weakened as they were by the absence of their Lord ; and with Him, of three, the chiefest among themselves—the three in whom, as habitually the nearest to Him, we may suppose his power most mightily resided. It was here again, as it was once before during the absence of Moses with his servant Joshua, on his mount of a fainter transfiguration (Exod. xxxiv. 29). Then, too, in like manner, the enemy profiting by his absence awhile prevailed against the people (Exod. xxxii.). And now the Scribes were pressing to the uttermost the advantage which they had gained by this miscarriage of the disciples. A great multitude too were gathered round, spectators of the defeat of Christ’s servants ; and the strife was at the highest,—the Scribes, no doubt, arguing from the impotence of the servants to the impotence of the Master,\* and they denying the conclusion ; when suddenly He concerning whom the strife was, appeared, returning from the holy Mount, his face and person yet glistening, as there is reason to suppose, with traces of the glory which had clothed Him there,—and which had not yet disappeared, nor faded into the light of common day. But very different was the impression which that glory made from the impres-

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\* Calvin : *Scribæ victores insultant, nec modo subsannant discipulos, sed proterviunt adversus Christum, quasi in illorum personā exinanita esset ejus virtus.*

sion made by the countenance of Moses. When the multitude saw *him*, as he came down from *his* mountain, the skin of his face shining, “they were afraid to come nigh him” (Exod. xxxiv. 30), for that glory upon his face was a *threatening* glory, the awful and intolerable brightness of the law. But the glory of God shining in the face of Christ Jesus, though awful too, is also an *attractive* glory, full of grace and beauty; it draws men to Him, does not drive them from Him; and thus, indeed, “*all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed*,” such gleams of brightness arrayed Him still; yet did they not therefore flee from Him, but rather, as the more allured by that brightness, “*running to Him, saluted Him*”\* (cf. 2 Cor. iii. 18).

Yet the sights and sounds which greeted Him on his return to our sinful world, how different were they from those which He had just quitted upon the holy Mount! There the highest harmonies of heaven; here some of the wildest and harshest discords of earth.† There He had been receiving from the Father honour and glory (2 Pet. i. 17); here his disciples, those to whom his work had been intrusted in his absence, had been procuring for Him, as far as in them lay, shame and dishonour. But as when some great captain, suddenly arriving upon a battle-field, where his subordinate lieutenants have well nigh lost the day, and brought all into a hopeless confusion, with his eye measures at once the necessities of the moment, and with no more than his presence

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\* Bengel with his usual beauty: Tangebantur a gloriâ, etiamsi nescirent quid in monte actum esset; cf. Marc. x. 32; Iuc. xix. 11; nec non Ex. iv. 14; xxxiv. 29. Occultam eum Dœo conversationem facile sentias majorem hominum erga te proclivitatem insequi. This is more likely than that it was the mere salutation, as Theophylact proposes, of one that had been absent for awhile; though he too was aware of the right explanation: τινὲς δὲ φασὶν ὅτι ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὑραπότερα γυμνένη ἀπὸ τοῦ φωτὸς τῆς μεταμορφώσεως, ἐφείλκετο τοὺς ὄχλους πρὸς τὸ ἀσπάζεσθαι.

† These mighty and wondrous contrasts have been embodied by Christian Art. In them lies the *idea* of Raphael’s great picture of the Transfiguration, and its two parts, which so mightily sustain one another.

causes the tide of victory to turn, and every thing to right itself again, so was it now. The Lord arrests the advancing and victorious foe: He addresses Himself to the Scribes; with the words, “*What question ye with them?*” taking the baffled and hard-pressed disciples under his own protection. What question there is more, henceforth it must be with Him. These, who were so forward to dispute with the servants, do not so readily accept the challenge to contend with the Master. Not they, but “*one of the multitude,*” the father of the poor child on whom the ineffectual attempt at healing had been made, is the first to speak; “*kneeling down to Him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son;*” and with this declaring the miserable case of his child, and the little help he had obtained from the disciples.

St. Mark paints the whole scene with the hand of a master, and his account of this miracle, compared with those of the other Evangelists, would alone suffice to vindicate for him an original character, and to refute the notion of some, that we have in his Gospel only an epitome, now of the first, and now of the third.\* All the symptoms, as put into the father’s mouth, or described by the sacred historians, exactly agree with those of epilepsy;—not that we have here *only* an epileptic; but this was the ground on which the deeper spiritual evils of this child were superinduced. The fits were sudden and lasted remarkably long; the evil spirit “*hardly departeth from him;*”—“*a dumb spirit,*” St. Mark calls it, a statement which does not contradict that of St. Luke, “*he suddenly crieth out;*” this dumbness was only in respect of articulate sounds; he could give no utterance to these. Nor was it a natural defect, as where the string of the tongue has remained unloosed (Mark viii. 32), or the needful organs for speech are wanting; nor yet a defect under which he had always laboured; but the consequence of this possession. When the

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\* Even Augustine falls in with this view (*De Cons. Evang.* i. 2): *Divus Marcus eum [Matthæum] subsequutus tanquam pedissequus et breviator ejus videtur.*

spirit took him in its might, then in these paroxysms of his disorder it tare him, till he foamed\* and gnashed with his teeth: and altogether he pined away like one the very springs of whose life were dried up.† And while these accesses of his disorder might come upon him at any moment and in any place, they often exposed him to the worst accidents: “*oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*” In St. Mark the father attributes these fits to the direct agency of the evil spirit: “*ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him;*” yet such calamities might equally be looked at as the natural consequences of his unhappy condition.‡

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\* Lucian (*Philopseudes*, 16) has ironical allusions, as I must needs think, to this and other cures of demons by our Lord: Πάντες ἴσασιν τὸν Σύρον τὸν ἐκ τῆς Παλαιστίνης, τὸν ἐπὶ τούτων σοφιστὴν, ὃσους παραλαβὼν καταπίπτοντας πρὸς τὴν σελήνην καὶ τὰ ὄφθαλμὰ διαστρέφοντας καὶ ἀφροῦ πυρπλαμένους τὸ στόμα ὅμως ἀνίστησι καὶ ἀποπέμπει ἀρτίους ἐπὶ μισθῷ μεγάλῳ ἀπαλλάξας τῶν δεινῶν. There is much of interest in the passage, besides what I have quoted.

† If indeed the word here used (*ξηραίνεται*) has not reference to the stiffness and starkness, the unnatural rigescence of the limbs, in the accesses of the disorder; cf. 2 Kin. xiii. 4, LXX. Such would not indeed be its first, but might well be its secondary, meaning, since that which is *dried up* loses its pliability, and the father is describing not the general pining away of his son, but his symptoms when the paroxysm took him. The *σεληνιαζόμενοι* (in other Greek *σεληνιακοί*, *σεληνόβλητοι*) are mentioned once besides in the N. T. (Matt. iv. 24), where they are distinguished from the *δαιμονιζόμενοι*. The distinction, however, whatever it was, in the popular language would continually disappear; and the father here saying of his son *σεληνιάζεται* does but express the fact, or rather the consequence, of his possession. Of course the word originally, like *μαρία* (from *μήνη*) and *lunaticus*, arose from the wide-spread belief, not altogether unfounded, of the evil influence of the moon (Ps. exxi. 6) on the human frame (see Creuzer, *Symbolik*, vol. ii. p. 571).

‡ These extracts will abundantly justify what was said above of the symptoms of this child's case being those of one taken with epilepsy. Cælius Aurelianus (*Morb. Chron.* i. 4): Alii [epileptici] publicis in locis cadendq; fodantur, adjunctis etiam externis periculis, loci causâ præcipites dati, aut in flumina vel mare cadentes. And Paulus Aëgineta, the last of the great physicians of the old world, describing epilepsy (iii. 13), might almost seem to have borrowed his account from this history: *Morbus comitialis est convulsio totius*

The father concludes his sad tale with an account of the defeated efforts of the nine to aid him; and declares what impotent exorcists they had proved: “*I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not.*” On this the Lord with a sorrowful indignation exclaimed, “*O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?*” We have two applications of these words. Some, as Origen, apply them to the disciples, and to them alone; they suppose that our Lord spake thus, grieved and indignant at the weakness of their faith, and that even so brief a separation from Him should have shorn them of their strength, and left them powerless against the kingdom of darkness; and the after discourse (Matt. xvii. 20) favours such an application. Others, as Chrysostom, and generally the early interpreters, pointedly *exclude* the disciples from the rebuke; which they consider addressed to the surrounding multitude alone; and certainly the term “*generation*” suits better for them,—in whom the Lord beholds specimens and representatives of the whole Jewish people, the father himself representing, only too well, the unbelieving temper of the whole generation to which he pertained (Mark ix. 22), and therefore sharing largely in the condemnation. This in St. Mark is directly addressed to him, yet the language shows that the rebuke is not restrained to him, but intended to pass on to many more. And indeed the most satisfactory explanation is one which reconciles both these views; the disciples are not exclusively aimed at, nor chiefly, but rather the multitude and the father: they, however, are included in the rebuke; their unfaithfulness and unbelief had brought them, for the time, back to a level with their nation, and they must

corporis cum principalium actionum læsione, . . . fit hæc affectio maxime pueris, postea vero etiam in adolescentibus et in vigore consistentibus. Instante vero iam symptomate collaptio ipsis derepente contigit at convulsio, et quandoque nihil significans exclamatio (εξ αὐθητῆς κράζει, Luke ix. 39). Præcipuum vero ipsorum signum est oris spuma (μετὰ ἀφροῦ, Luke ix. 39).

share with it all in a common reproach. “*How long shall I be with you?*” are words not so much of one longing to put off the coil of flesh,\* as rather of a master, complaining of the slowness and dulness of his scholars: “Have I abode with you all this time, and have you profited so little by my teaching?” at the same time He feels that till their task is learned, He cannot leave them, but must abide with them still.† We may compare his words to Philip, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” (John xiv. 9.)

And now, since the help which is done on earth, He must Himself do it, He exclaims, “*Bring him unto Me.*” As the staff in Gehazi’s hand could not arouse the dead child, but the prophet himself must arrive and undertake the work, if it were to be done at all, so is it now (2 Kin. iv. 31). Yet the first bringing of the child to Jesus causes another of the fearful paroxysms of his disorder, so that “*he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming.*” The kingdom of Satan in small and in great is ever stirred into a fiercer activity by the coming near of the kingdom of Christ. Satan has great wrath, when his time is short.‡ But as the Lord on occasion of another difficult and perilous cure (Mark v. 9) began a conversation with the sufferer Himself, seeking thus to inspire him with confidence, to bring back something of calmness to his soul, so does He now with the representative of the sufferer, the father, being precluded by *his* actual condition from doing this with himself: “*How long is it ago since this came unto him?*” The father answers, “*Of a child,*”

\* Jerome (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): Non quod tædio superatus sit, et mansuetus ac mitis; . . . sed quod in similitudinem medici si ægrotum videat contra sua præcepta se gerere dicat: Usquequo accedam ad domum tuam, quousque artis perdam injuriam; me aliud jubente et te aliud perpetrante?

† Bengel: Festinabat ad Patrem: nec tamen abitum se facere posse sciebat, priusquam discipulos ad fidem perduxisset. Molesta erat tarditas eorum.

‡ Calvin: Quo propior affulget Christi gratia, et efficacius agit, eo impotenter fuit Satan.

and, for the stirring of more pity, describes again the miserable perils in which these fits involved his child; at the same time ill content that anything should come before the healing, if a healing were possible, having, also, present to his mind the recent failure of the disciples, he adds, “*If Thou, Thou more than those, canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.*” In that “*us,*” we see how entirely his own life is knit up with his child’s: as the woman of Canaan, pleading for her daughter, had cried, “Have mercy *on me*” (Matt. xv. 22). At the same time he reveals by that “*if,*” that he has come with no unquestioning faith in Christ’s power to aid, but is rendering the difficult cure more difficult still by his own doubts and unbelief.

Our Lord’s answer is not without its difficulty, especially as it appears in the original, but the sense of it is plainly the following: “That ‘*if*’ of thine, that uncertainty whether this can be done or not, is to be resolved by thee and not by Me. There is a condition without which this thy child cannot be healed; but the fulfilling of the condition lies with no other than thyself. The absence of faith on thy part, and not any overmastering power in this malignant spirit, is that which straitens Me; if this cure is hard, it is thou that renderest it so. Thou hast said, ‘If I can do anything:’ but the question is, ‘*If thou canst believe;*’ this is the hinge upon which all must turn”—and then with a pause, and no merely suspended sense, as in our Version,\* follow those further words, “*All things are possible to him that believeth.*” Thus faith is here, as in each other case, set as the condition of healing; on other occasions it is the faith of the person; but here, that being impossible, the father’s is accepted instead; even as the

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\* The words, I imagine, should be pointed thus: τὸ, εἰ δύνασαι πιστεῦσας πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι and Bengel enters rightly into the construction of the first clause, explaining it thus: Hoc, si potes credere, res est; hoc agitur. Calvin: Tu me rogas ut subveniam quoad potero; atqui inexhaustum virtutis fontem in me reperies, si modo afferas satis amplam fidei mensuram.

Syrophenician mother's in the room of her daughter's (Matt. xv. 22). Thus the Lord appears, in Olshausen's words, in some sort a *μαίευτὴς πίστεως*, helping the birth of faith in that travailing soul; even as at length, though with pain and sore travail, it comes to the birth, so that the father exclaims, "*Lord, I believe;*" and then, the little spark of faith which has been kindled in his soul revealing to him the abysmal deeps of unbelief which are there, he adds this further: "*Help Thou mine unbelief.*"\* For thus it is ever: only in the light of the actual presence of a grace in the soul does that soul perceive the strength and prevalence of the opposing corruption. Till then it had no measure by which to measure its deficiency. Only he who believes, guesses any thing of the unbelief of his heart.

When now this prime condition of healing is no longer wanting on his part, the Lord, meeting and rewarding even the weak beginnings of his faith, accomplishes the cure. Let us observe, in his address to the foul spirit, the majestic "*I charge thee;* no longer one whom thou mayest hope to disobey, against whom thou mayest venture to struggle, but I, the Prince of the kingdom of light, *charge thee, come out of him.*" Nor is this all: he shall "*enter no more into him;*" his return is barred; he shall not take advantage of his long possession, presently to come back (Matt. xii. 45), and re-assert his dominion; the cure shall be at once perfect and lasting. He must obey; but he does so most unwillingly; what he can no longer retain he would, if he might, destroy; as Fuller, with a wit which is "*in season and out of season,*" expresses it, "*like an outgoing tenant, that cares not what mischief he does.*"† So fearful was this last paroxysm, so

\* Augustine, *Serm. xlivi. 6, 7.*

† Gregory the Great (*Moral. xxxii. 19*): *Ecce eum non discerperat cum tenebat, exiens discerpsit: quia nimirum tunc pejus cogitationes mentis dilaniat, cum jam egressui divinâ virtute compulsus appropinquat. Et quem mutus possederat, cum clamoribus deserebat: quia plerumque cum possidet, minora tentamenta irrogat: cum vero de corde pellitur, aeriori infestatione perturbat.* Cf. *Hom.*

entirely had it exhausted all the powers of the child, “*that he was as one dead; and many said, He is dead; but Jesus took him by the hand,*” and life from that touch of the Lord of life flowed into him anew: even as we often elsewhere find a revivifying power to be by the same channel conveyed (Dan. x. 8, 9; Rev. i. 17; Matt. xvii. 6-8).

“*Then*”—“*when He was come into the house,*” as we learn from St. Mark—“*came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*” Where was the secret of their defeat, seeing that they were not exceeding their commission (Matt. x. 8), and had on former occasions found the devils subject to them (Luke x. 17)? “*And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief,*” because of their lack of that to which, and to which only, all things are possible. They had made but a languid use of the means for stirring up and increasing faith; while yet, though the locks of their strength were shorn, they would “*go out as at other times before*” against their enemies, being certain to be foiled whenever they encountered an enemy of peculiar malignity. And such they encountered here; for the phrase “*this kind*” marks that there are orders of evil spirits, that as there is a hierarchy of heaven, so is there an inverted hierarchy of hell. The same is intimated in the mention of the unclean spirit going and taking “*seven other spirits more wicked than himself*” (Matt. xii. 45); and at Ephes. vi. 12, there is probably a climax, mounting up from one degree of spiritual power and malignity to another. “*This kind,*” He declares, “*goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*” The faith which shall be effectual against this must be a faith exercised in prayer, that has not relaxed itself by an habitual compliance with the demands of the lower nature, but has often girt itself up to an austerer rule, to rigour and self-denial.

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xii. in *Ezek.*; and H. de Sto. Victore: Dum puer ad Dominum accedit, eliditur: quia conversi ad Dominum plerumque a dæmonio gravis pulsantur, ut vel ad vitia reducantur, vel de suâ expulsione se vindicet diabolus.

But as the secret of all weakness is in unbelief, so of all strength in faith: "*For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*" The image re-appears with some modifications, Luke xvii. 6; and St. Paul probably alludes to these words of his Lord, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Many explain "*faith as a grain of mustard-seed*" to mean *lively* faith, with allusion to the keen and biting powers of that grain.\* But it certainly is not on this side that the comparison should be urged; rather, it is the *smallest* faith, with a tacit contrast between a grain of mustard-seed, a very small thing (Matt. xiii. 31, 32), and a mountain, a very great. That smallest shall be effectual to work on this largest. The least spiritual power, which is really such, shall be strong to overthrow the mightiest powers which are merely of this world.

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\* Augustine (*Serm. cclvi.*): Modicum videtur granum sinapis; nihil contemtibilius adspectu, nihil fortius gustu. Quod quid est aliud, nisi maximus ardor et intima vis fidei in Ecclesiâ?

## 28. THE STATER IN THE FISH'S MOUTH.

MATT. xvii. 24-27.

NO other Evangelist records this miracle but St. Matthew; and before we have closed our examination of it, it will, I think, be abundantly clear why we meet it, if in one only, then in that Gospel which is eminently the Gospel of the kingdom, of the King, and of the King's Son. But the true depth and significance of it have not been always seized. They are quite lost and let go, and the entire transaction emptied of its higher meaning, robbed of all deeper lessons, when it is assumed that the "*tribute*" which is here demanded of the Lord was a civil impost, owing, like the penny of a later occasion (Matt. xxii. 19), to the Roman emperor, instead of what it truly was, a national and theocratic payment, due to the temple and the temple's God. "*Tribute*"\* in our translation is in all respects an unhappy rendering, upholds, and indeed suggests such an error. If many expositors, ancient and modern, and some of high authority, have fallen into it, they have done so oftener, I am persuaded, from not having the right interpretation, which carries conviction with it, before them, than from a deliberate preference of the wrong. Thus Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, and Jerome; who all understand a civil payment; the two last finding here the same lesson as at Rom. xiii. 1-7: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers . . . Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due,"—the lesson of a willing obedience on the part of the faithful to the civil power.†

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\* In the original, *τὰ διδραχμα.*

† *De Catechiz. Iud. 21:* Ipse Dominus ut nobis hujus sanæ doctrinæ præberet exemplum, pro capite hominis, quo erat induitus, tributum solvere non dedignatus est; and Clement (*Pædag.* 2, Potter's ed. vol. i. p. 172): *Τὸν στατῆρα τοῖς τελώναις δόνς, τὰ Καίσαρος ἀποδόνς τῷ Καίσαρι.*

But none of these reject, they seem rather unaware of, the deeper interpretation of the miracle. Not so Maldonatus, here for once at one with Calvin, the great object of his polemical hatred. The last, however, has a glimpse of, though he does not grasp, the truth. He accounts the money claimed to have been indeed due to the temple and the temple's God; but to have been already alienated by the Romans for the service of the Imperial treasury.\* This, however, as will be seen, is historically incorrect; such alienation found place, but not till a later time.†

The arguments for the other interpretation, both external and internal, are quite overpowering. For, in the first place, this “*didrachm*”‡ which the collectors here demand, was exactly the ransom of souls, appointed (Exod. xxx. 11-16) to be paid by every Israelite above twenty years old to the service and current expenses of the tabernacle, or, as it afterwards would be, of the temple.§ It must be allowed that it does

\* Ita quasi alienati essent Judæi a Dei imperio, profanis tyrannis solvebant sacrum censum in lege indictum.

† Add to these Wolf (*Curae*, in loc.), who has the wrong interpretation; and Petitus (*Crit. Sac.* ix. 2566); Corn. a Lapide; and recently, after any further mistake seemed impossible, Wieseler (*Chronol. Synopse*, p. 265, seq.) has returned to the old error. The true meaning has been perfectly seized by Hilary (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.); by Ambrose (*Lp.* vii. *Ad Justum*, 12); in the main by Chrysostom (*In Matt. Hom.* liv.) and Theophylact, who have yet both gone astray upon Num. iii. 40-51; and in later times by Cameron (*Crit. Sac.* in loc.); by Freher (*Ibid.* vol. ix. p. 3633); by Hammond, who has altogether a true insight into the matter; Grotius, Lightfoot, Bengel, Michaëlis; and last of all by Olshausen, Stier, Greswell (*Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 376), and Alford.

‡ It is true that in the Septuagint (Exod. xxx. 13) it is  $\gamma\mu\sigma\nu\tau\omega$  διδράχμον. But this arises from their expressing themselves, as naturally they would, according to the Alexandrian drachm, which was twice the value of the Attic (see Hammond, in loc.).

§ The sum there named is a half shekel. Before the Babylonian exile, the shekel was only a certain weight of silver, not a coined money: in the time, however, of the Maccabees (1 Macc. xv. 6) the Jews received the privilege, or won the right, from the kings of Syria of coining their own money; and the shekels, half shekels, and quarter shekels now found in the cabinets of collectors are to be referred to

not there appear as an annual payment, but only as payable on the occasions, not frequently recurring, of the numbering of the people. But it became annual, whether this had been the real intention of the ordinance from the first, or out of a later custom which arose only after the Babylonian Captivity. Some have thought that they found traces, indeed distinct notices, of this payment before that time, at 2 Kin. xii. 4; 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, 6, 9; and all the circumstances of what is there described as the collection which "Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness," make this probable.\* At a later day, it is the *third* part of a shckel, and not the *half*, which the Jews impose upon themselves (Nehem. x. 32). This might suggest a doubt whether the same contribution is there intended; as they would scarcely have ventured to alter the amount of a divinely instituted payment. Yet the fact that it was yearly, and expressly for the service of God's house, will not allow us to suppose it any other; and they may have found in their present poverty and distress an ex-

this period. These growing scarce, and not being coined any more, it became the custom to estimate the temple-dues as two drachms (the δέδραχμον here required), a sum actually somewhat larger than the half shekel, as those that have compared together the weights of the existing specimens of each have found; thus Josephus (*Annt.* iii. 8, 2): 'Ο δὲ σίκλος νόμισμα Ἐβραίων ἦν, Ἀττικὰς δέχεται δραχμὰς τέσσαρας. As the produce of the miracle was to pay for two persons, the sum required was four drachms, or a whole shckel, and the στατήρ found in the mouth of the fish is just that sum. It indeed often bore the name of τετράδραχμος. Jerome: Siclus autem, id est stater, habet drachmas quatuor. It is almost needless to say that this stater is not the gold coin that more accurately bears that name, which would have been equal not to four, but to twenty, drachms; but the silver tetradrachm, which in later times of Greece came to be called a stater. That other stater, equal to the Persian darie, would have been worth something more than sixteen shillings of our money, this three shillings and three pence (see the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Annt.* s. vv. Drachma and Stater; and Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Sekel). It is curious that Theophylact should be ignorant of what this stater is. Some think it, he says, a precious stone which is found in Syria.

\* So Dathe; Michaëlis (*Mos. Recht*, vol. iii. p. 202) questions or denies it.

cuse for the diminution of the charge. Josephus\* mentions that it was an annual payment in his time; Philo does the same, and attests the conscientious and ungrudging accuracy with which it was paid by the Jews of the Dispersion, so that in almost every city of the Empire, and in cities too beyond its limits, there was a sacred chest for the collection of these dues: the sum of which at stated times sacred messengers were selected from among the worthiest to bear to Jerusalem.† It was Vespasian who diverted this capitation tax into the imperial fisc, but only after the city and the temple had been destroyed. Josephus is very distinct on this point; whose words it may be worth while to quote, as the only argument in favour of a *secular* and not a *theocratic* payment is, that *before* our Lord's time, and as early as Pompeius, these moneys were turned from their original destination, and made payable to the Roman treasury. Of Vespasian he writes: "He imposed a tribute on the Jews wheresoever they lived, requiring each to pay yearly two drachms to the Capitol, as before they were wont to pay them to the temple at Jerusalem."‡ But of Pompeius he merely affirms, that "he made Jerusalem tributary to the Romans,"§ with no

\* *Antt.* xviii. 9, 1. The time appointed for the payment was between the 15th and 25th of the month Adar (March), that is, about the feast of the passover. Yet no secure chronological conclusions in regard to our Lord's ministry can be won from this; as, through his absence from Capernaum, the money might have been for some time due. Indeed, in all probability, the feast of tabernacles was now at hand.

† *De Monarch.* ii. § 3: Ιεροπομποὶ τῶν χρημάτων ἀριστίνδην ἐπικριθέντες. The whole passage reminds one much of the collection, and the manner of the transmission, of the gifts of the faithful in Achaia to Jerusalem by the hands of Paul; cf. his *Leg. ad Cai.* § 31. We find from Cicero's oration, *Pro Flacco* (28), that one accusation made against Flaccus was that he prevented the transmission of these temple-dues to Jerusalem; incidentally he bears witness to the wide extent of the practice: Cum aurum, Judæorum nomine, quotannis ex Italia et ex omnibus vestris provinciis Hierosolymam exportari soleret, Flaccus sanxit edicto, ne ex Asiâ exportari liceret.

‡ *Bell. Jud.* vii. 6, 6.

§ *Antt.* xiv. 4, 4: Τὰ μὲν Ιεροσόλυμα ὑποτελῆ φόρου Ρωμαῖοις ἐποίησεν.

mention of this tax at all. We have already seen that abundant evidence exists of its having continued long after his time to be rendered to the temple. Titus alludes to this fact, when, upbraiding the Jews with the unprovoked character of their revolt, he reminds the revolters that the Romans had permitted them to collect their own sacred imposts.\*

It may be noted further that it is not “publicans” who demand this tribute, as the collectors would certainly have been called, had they been the ordinary tax-gatherers, and this the ordinary tax. As little is the tone of the demand, “*Doth not your Master pay the didrachm?*”† that of a rude Roman tax-gatherer, who had detected one in the act of evading, as he supposed, the tax; but is perfectly natural, when the duty of paying was one of imperfect obligation, one which if any chose to decline, the payment could scarcely have been compelled.‡

But the most prevailing argument of all, in proof that this “*tribute*” was God’s money, which should be rendered to God, and not Cæsar’s, which should be rendered to Cæsar, remains behind; this namely, that otherwise there would be no force whatever in the Lord’s conclusion, “*Then are the children free,*” as giving this immunity to Him. As a Son in his own house, He affirmed his own exemption from payments due to God. How could He *on this ground*, on the ground, that is, of being the Son of him on whose behalf the

\* Δασμολογεῖν ὑμῖν ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ ἐπιτρέψαμεν.

† Τὰ δίδραχμα, with the article, as something perfectly well known: in the plural the first time, to mark the *number* of didrachms that were received, being one from each person; on the second, to mark the yearly *repetition* of the payment from each.

‡ Kuinoel (in loc.), who may be numbered among the right interpreters of this passage, observes this: *Exactores Romani acerbius haud dubie exigebissent tributum Cæsari solvendum.* And in the Rabbinical treatise especially relating to the manner of collecting these dues, it is said: *Placide a quovis semisiculum expetierunt.* Grotius: *Credibile est multos, quia non cogebantur, id onus detrectasse.*

tax was levied, have claimed immunity from a payment due to Cæsar? He was no son of Cæsar. He might, indeed, have asserted his freedom on other grounds; though *that* He would not, since He had come submitting Himself during his earthly life to every ordinance of man. But this claim which He actually does put forward, only holds good on the assumption that the payment is one made to God. They who deny this are driven to say that it is his royal Davidical descent, in right of which He asserts this immunity. But this cannot stand: for the conclusion then would be, that Jesus being one King's Son, He therefore is exempted from the tribute owing to another king, and that other, one of a hostile dynasty,—in itself an argument most futile, and certainly not that of the sacred text.\*

We may presume, then, that our Lord, with Peter and other of his disciples, was now returning to "his city," that is, Capernaum, after one of his usual absences.† He may have passed without question; the collectors not venturing to address Him. But they detain Peter, who had lingered perhaps a little behind his Lord; and of him they ask, "*Doth not your Master pay tribute?*" or "*pay the didrachm?*" This question sounds to Chrysostom a rude one: "Does your Master count Himself exempt from the payment of the ordinary dues? we know the freedom which He claims; does He propose to exercise it here?" It may be so; but it may be, as Theophylact suggests, the reverse. Having seen or heard of the wonderful works which Christ did, they may have been really uncertain in what light to regard Him, whether to claim from Him the money or not, and this doubt may utter itself in their question. But after all, we want what the his-

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\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* i. qu. 23) helps it out in another way: *In omni regno terreno intelligendum est liberos esse regni filios . . . . Multo ergo magis liberi esse debent in quolibet regno terreno filii regni illius, sub quo sunt omnia regna terrena.*

† See Greswell, *Dissertations*, vol. ii. p. 374 sq.

tory has not given, the *tone* and manner in which the question was put, to determine this.

Peter at once replies in the affirmative; “*He saith, Yes.*” Zealous for his Master’s honour, sure that his piety will make Him prompt in whatever God’s ordinance required, he pledges Him without hesitation to the payment. He was over-hasty in this. It was not in this spirit that he exclaimed a little while before: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. xvi. 16). For the time at least he had lost sight of his Lord’s true position and prerogative, that He was a Son over his own house, and not a servant in another’s; the Head of the theocracy, not one of its subordinate members,—so that it was *to Him* in his Father that offerings were to be made, not *from Him* to be received.\* It was not for Him who was “greater than the temple,” and Himself the true temple (John ii. 21), identical with it according to its spiritual significance, and in whom the Shechinah glory dwelt, to pay dues for the support of that other temple built with hands, whose glory was vanishing away, now that in his flesh the true tabernacle was set up, which the Lord had pitched and not man.

He who was to give Himself a ransom for all other souls could not properly pay a ransom for his own; and it disturbed the true relation between Him and all other men that He should seem to pay it. Willing therefore to bring back Peter, and in him the other disciples, to the true recognition of Himself, from which they had in part fallen, the Lord puts to him the question which follows; even as with the same intention, being engaged, through Peter’s hasty imprudence, to the rendering of the didrachm, which now He could

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\* Ambrose (*Lp.* vii. 12, *Ad Justum*): *Hoc est igitur didrachma, quod exigebat secundum legem: sed non debebat illud filius regis, sed alienus.* Quid enim se Christus redimeret ab hoc mundo, qui venerat ut tolleret peccatum mundi? Quid se a peccato redimeret, qui descendebat, ut omnibus peccatum dimitteret? . . . Quid se redimeret a morte, qui carnem suscepserat, ut morte suâ omnibus resurrectionem adquireret? Cf. *Enarr. in Ps.* xlviii. 14.

scarcely recede from, He yet does it in the remarkable way of this present miracle—a miracle which should testify that all things served Him, from the greatest to the least, even to the fishes that wandered through the paths of the sea,—that He was Lord over nature, and, having nothing, yet, in his Father's care for Him, was truly possessed of all things.\* For here, as so often in the life of our Lord, the depth of his poverty and humiliation is lighted up by a gleam of his glory; while, by the manner of the payment, He re-asserts the true dignity of his person, which else by the payment itself was in danger of being obscured and compromised in the eyes of some. The miracle, then, was to supply a real need,—slight, indeed, as an outward need, for the money could assuredly have been in some other and more ordinary way procured; but as an inner need, most real: in this, then, differing in its essence from the apocryphal miracles, which are so often mere sports and freaks of power, having no ethical motive or meaning whatever.

We may trace this purpose in all which follows. The

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\* Djeladdin's grand poem, which Tholuck has translated (*Blüthenzimm. aus der Morgenl. Myst.* p. 148), tells exactly the same story, namely, that all nature waits on him who is the friend of God, so that all things are his, and his seeming poverty is but another side of his true riches; only that what there is but in idea, is here clothed in the flesh and blood of an actual fact. I can give but a most inadequate extract:

Adham Ibrahim sass einst am Meeresstrand,  
Nähte dort als Bettler sich sein Mönchgewand.  
Plötzlich tritt ein Emir mit Gefolg' ihn an,  
Der vormals dem Seelenkönig unterthan,  
Küsst den Fuss ihm, und wird alsbald verwirrt,  
Da den Scheich er in der Kutt' ansichtig wird.  
Den, dem einst gehorcht' ein weites Landgebiet,  
Staunend er jetzt seine Kutt'e nähen sieht.

\* \* \*

Drauf der Scheich die Nadel plötzlich wirft in's Meer,  
Ruft dann laut: Ihr Fische, bringt die Nadel her!  
Als bald ragen hunderttausend Köpf' hervor,  
Jeder Fisch bringt eine goldne Nadel vor.  
Nun der Scheich mit Ernst sich zu dem Emir kehrt:  
Wunderst du dich noch, dass ich die Kutt' begehr?

Lord does not wait for Peter to inform Him what he had answered, and to what engaged Him; but "*when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him,*" anticipated his communication, showed Himself a discerner of the thoughts of the heart, and, though He had not been present, perfectly aware of all which had passed.\* "*What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth?*" (with an emphasis on these last words, for there is a silent contrasting of these with the King of heaven, as at Ps. ii. 2) "*take custom or tribute?† of their own children, or of strangers?*" On what principle has He been promising this? is not all the analogy of things earthly against it? These earthly things, it is true, cannot prove the heavenly, yet are they shadows of the true, and divinely appointed helps for the better understanding of them. When Peter confesses that not of their own children, but "*of strangers,*"‡ then at once He brings him to the conclusion whither He was leading him, that "*the children,*" or as it would be better, "*the sons,*" were "*free.*"§ But this plural,

\* Jerome: *Antequam Petrus suggesteret, Dominus interrogat, ne scandalizentur discipuli ad postulationem tributi, quum videant eum nosse quā absente se gesta sunt.*

† *Kῆρσος*, the capitation tax; *τέλη*, customs or tolls on goods.

‡ There is no doubt a difficulty in finding exactly the right translation for *ἀλλοτρίων*. For it is not so strong as our "*strangers*," or the *alieni* of the Vulgate, or Luther's, von Fremden. It means to express no more than those that are not the *vīoī*, that stand not in this nearest and most immediate relation to the king (*qui non pertinent ad familiam regis*: Kuinoel). So Hammond, "*other folk*," and De Wette, von ihren Söhnen [which is better than Luther's, von ihren Kindern], oder von den andern Leuten: compare for this use of *ἀλλότριος*, Eccl. xl. 29. Gfrörer (*Die heil. Sage*, vol. ii. p. 56), stumbling at the whole account, finds fault with this interpretation, because, forsooth, the Jews were not *ἀλλότριοι*,—as though they were not so in comparison with Christ; and, again, because they too were *vīoī Θεοῦ*,—as though they were so in any such sense as He was. It is most true that for him and for all like him, to whom there is nothing in Christ different from another man, the narrative does, in his own words, "suffer under incurable difficulties."

§ With a play on the words, which is probably much more than a mere play, and rests upon a true etymology, so witnessing for the very truth which Christ is asserting here, we might say in Latin,

"*the sons*," rather than a singular, "*the son*," has perplexed some, who have asked, How could the Lord thus speak, if indeed He had Himself alone, as the only-begotten Son of God, in his eye? The explanation is easy. In making a general statement of the worldly relations from which He borrows his analogy, and by which He assists the understanding of his disciples, as there are many "*kings of the earth*," or as any one king might have many sons, He naturally throws his speech into a plural form; and it is just as natural, when we come to the heavenly order of things which is there shadowed forth, to restrain it to the singular, to the one Son; seeing that to the King of heaven there is but One, the only-begotten of the Father.\* But if the plural here need cause us no misgiving, as little can there be drawn from it the conclusion, that the Lord intended to include in this liberty not Himself only, but all his people, all that in this secondary sense are the "*sons of God*." This plainly is not true concerning dues owing to God; there are none so bound to render them as his "*sons*," were the payment in question a civil one, it would be equally untrue; however such an interpretation might be welcome to Anabaptists;† how-

Liberi sunt liberi (liberi, the children, so called in opposition to the household, the servi: Freund, *Lat. Wörterbuch*, s. v. liber). Those very words do occur in the noble Easter hymn beginning,

Cedant justi signi luctus.

\* Grotius observes rightly that it is the *locus communis*, which is to account for the plural: *Plurali numero utitur, non quod ad alios eam extendat libertatem, sed quod comparatio id exigebat, sumta non ab unius sed ab omnium Regum more ac consuetudine.* The best defence of the cleaving to the plural in the application of the words is that made by Cocecius: *Christus ostendit nec se, qui Filius Dei est, obligari ad didrachma solvendum, tanquam λύτρον animæ sue, nec suos discipulos, qui ab ipso haereditant libertatem, et non argento redimuntur* (Es. iii. 3), *sed pretioso ipsius sanguine* (1 Pct. i. 18, 19), *et facti sunt filii Dei vivi* (Hos. i. 10), *amplius teneri ad servitutem figuræ.* Olshausen follows him in this.

† The Anabaptist conclusions which might be drawn from an abuse of the passage are met on right general grounds by Aquinas (*Sum. Theol.* 2<sup>o</sup> 2<sup>o</sup>, 104, art. 6), though he has not any very precise insight into the meaning of this history. Milton (*Defence of the People of England*, 3) makes exceedingly unfair use of this passage.

ever some extreme Romish canonists draw hence an argument for the exemption of the clergy from payments to the state, although others among themselves justly remark that the words, if they include any of the faithful, include all.\* Not thus, not as one of many, not as the first among many sons, but as the true and only Son of God, He challenges this liberty for Himself; and “we may observe, by the way, that the reasoning itself is a strong and convincing testimony to the proper Sonship, and in the capacity of Son to the proper relationship of Jesus Christ to the Father, which those who deny that relationship will not easily evade or impugn.”† There is in these words the same implicit assertion that Christ’s relation to God is a different one from that of other men, which runs through the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, in the distinction which is so markedly drawn between the son of the householder and his servants (Mark xii. 6): nor are there any testimonies to the dignity and the prerogatives of the Son more convincing than these, which, not contained in single isolated expressions, not lying on the surface of Scripture, are bedded deeply in it, and rather as-

\* Tirinus: *Nam pari jure omnes justi, immo omnes Christiani exempti essent.* Michaëlis affirms that others have pushed these words to the asserting of the same liberty; for he tells a story (*Mos. Recht*, vol. iii. p. 210) of having himself, in travelling, seen a Pietist cheat the revenue before his eyes: on asking him how he could find conscience to do so, the other defended himself with these words, “*Then are the children free.*” The story is, unhappily, only too welcome to him.

† Greswell, *Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 736. Chrysostom uses the same argument. I know not whether any use was made of this passage in the Arian controversy by those who were upholding the Catholic faith; but Hilary, a confessor and standard-bearer for the truth in that great conflict, does distinctly bring out how the Godhead of Christ is involved in this argument (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): *Didrachma tamquam ab homine poscebatur a Christo. Sed ut ostenderet legi se non esse subiectum, ut in se paterna dignitatis gloriam contestaretur, terreni privilegii posuit exemplum: censu aut tributis regum filios non teneri, potiusque se Redemptorem animae nostræ corporisque esse quam in redemptionem sui aliquid postulandum; quia Regis Filium extra communionem oporteret esse reliquorum.*

sume his preëminence than declare it. It is true that for those determined not to be convinced, there is always a loophole of escape, as from other declarations, so also from these; in the present instance, the plural “*sons*” affords, for those who seek it, the desired opportunity of evasion.

Under this protest Christ will pay the money; “*notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up;*\* and *when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee.*” He will put no stumbling-block in the way of any. Were He now to refuse this payment, it might seem to those who knew not the transcendent secret of his birth that He was using a false liberty,† was come not to fulfil the law, but to destroy it. He will provide things honest in the sight of all. There was no need, only a becomingness, in the payment; as there was no necessity for his baptism; it was that whereto of his own choice He willingly submitted; nor yet for the circumcision which He received in his flesh; but He took on Him the humiliations of the law, that He might in due time deliver from under the law. And here comes out the deeper meaning of the Lord not paying for Himself only, but also for Peter, the representative of all the faithful. He came under the same yoke with men, that they might enter into the same freedom with Him.‡ “*That take, and give unto them for*

\* This does not mean, the first that he *drew up* with his line, but the first that *ascended* from the deeper waters to his hook.

† Chrysostom (*Hom. lxiv. in Joh.*) understands in a remarkably different way these words, “*Lest we should offend them;*” lest, when this secret of our heavenly birth, and our consequent exemption from tribute, is told them, they should be unable to receive it; lest we should thus put a stumbling block in their way, revealing to them something which they were altogether unable to receive.

‡ Ambrose (*Ep. vii. 18, Ad Justum*): Ideo didrachmum solvi jubet pro se et Petro, quia uterque sub lege generati. Jubet ergo secundum legem solvi, ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret. And Augustine, on the words which he found Ps. cxxxvii, 8: Domine, retribues pro me, adduces this history, saying, Nihil debebat: pro se non red-

*Me and thee.”\** He says not “for *us*,” but “*for Me and thee* ;” just as elsewhere, “I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father, and to *my* God and *your* God” (John xxv. 17); for, while He makes common part with his brethren, yet He does this by an act of condescension, not by a necessity of nature; and for them it greatly imports that they should understand this; nor at any time lose sight of the fact that here is a delivered and a Deliverer, a ransomed and a Ransomer, however to the natural eye there might seem two who are ransomed alike. And, as on other occasions, at his presentation in the temple (Luke ii. 22-24), and again at his baptism, there was something more than common which should hinder the misunderstanding of that which was done; at the presentation, in Simeon’s song and Anna’s thanksgiving; at the baptism, first in John’s reluctance to baptize Him, and then in the opened heaven and the voice from thence;—so also is there here a protest of Christ’s immunity from the present payment, first in his own declaration,

didit, sed pro nobis reddidit; and again (*Serm. clv. 7*): Mysterium latebat: Christus tamen tributum non debitum persolvebat. Sie persolvit et mortem; non debebat, et persolvebat. Ille nisi indebitum solveret, nunquam nos a debito liberaret. Jerome (*Comm. in Matt. in loc.*): Ut ostenderetur similitudo earnis, dum codem et servus et Dominus pretio liberatur.

\* Moule (*Heraldry of Fish*) gives the natural mythology connected with this miracle: “A popular idea assigns the dark marks on the shoulders of the haddock to the impression left by St. Peter with his finger and thumb, when he took the tribute-money out of the fish’s mouth at Capernaum; but the haddock certainly does not now exist in the seas of the country where the miracle was performed. . . . . The dory, called St. Peter’s fish in several countries of Europe, contends with the haddock the honour of bearing the marks of the Apostle’s fingers, an impression transmitted to posterity as a perpetual memorial of the miracle. The name of the dory is hence asserted to be derived from the French *adoré*, worshipped.”—Let us observe here the  $\alpha\pi\tau\iota \ \xi\mu\sigma\iota \ \kappa\alpha\iota \ \sigma\sigma\iota$  (cf. Matt. xx. 28; and Winer, *Gramm.* § 51, 5. a.)—another proof that we have here to do with the ransom *for* persons, a price given *in their stead*, with a reference to the original institution of this payment, and so another argument, if that were needed, for the correctness of the interpretation maintained at the outset.

*“Then are the children free;”* and next in the novel method by which He supplies the necessity which Peter has made for Him.\* It is remarkable, and is a solitary instance of the kind, that the issue of this bidding is not told us: but we are, of course, meant to understand that at his Lord’s command Peter went to the neighbouring lake, cast in his hook, and in the mouth of the first fish that rose to it, found, according to his Lord’s word, the money that was needed.

Here, as little as on a former occasion (Luke v. 4, 6), does the miraculous in the miracle consist in a mere foreknowledge on the Lord’s part that the first fish which came up should bear this coin in its mouth; but He Himself, by the mysterious potency of his will which ran through all nature, drew such a fish to that spot at that moment, and ordained that it should swallow the hook. We may compare Jonah i. 17, “The Lord *had prepared* a great fish to swallow up Jonah.” We see thus the sphere of animal life unconsciously obedient to his will; that also is not *out* of God, but moves *in* Him, as does every other creature (1 Kin. xiii. 2 f.; xx. 36; Amos ix. 3).

All attempts to exhaust this miracle of its miraculous element, to make the Evangelist to be telling, and meaning to tell, an ordinary transaction,—as that of the rationalist Paulus, who will have it that the Lord bade Peter go and catch as many fish as would sell for the required sum, and maintains that this actually lies in the words,†—are hope-

\* Bengel: In medio actu submissionis emeat majestas. And Clarius: Reddit ergo censem, sed ex ore pisces acceptum, ut agnoscatur majestas. So too Origen (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.) recognizes a saving of the Lord’s dignity in the mode of the payment. Of course, when we speak of this saving of his dignity, it is of a saving, not for his own sake, but for men’s, since it is most important for them that they think not unworthily of Him. In other cases, where misapprehension was possible, we find a like care for this (John xi. 41, 42).

† His honesty and his Greek keep admirable company. Πρῶτον ἵχθεν he takes collectively, primum quemque pisces, ἀροτέας τὸ στάτηρα αὐτοῦ solvens cum ab hamo, εὑρήσεις στατῆρα vendendo pisces statera tibi comparabis. This has not even the merit of novelty; for see

lessly absurd. Yet, on the other hand, we multiply miracles without a warrant when we assume that the stater was *created* for the occasion;\* nay more, we step altogether out of the region of miracle into that of absolute creation; for in the miracle, as distinguished from the act of pure creation, there is always a nature-basis to which the divine power which works the wonder more or less closely links itself. That divine power which dwelt in Christ, restored, as in the case of the sick, the halt, the blind; it multiplied, as the bread in the wilderness; it changed into a nobler substance, as the

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Köcher, *Inalecta*, in loc., 1766: Piseem bapies quem pro statere vendere poteris. In a later work, however, Paulus desires to amend his plea, and *ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα* is no longer opening the fish's mouth to take out the hook, but, opening thine own mouth, i. e. crying the fish for sale, *αὐτῷ* there, *εὑρήσεις στατῆρα* thou wilt earn a stater. Another of the same school (see Kuinoel, in loc.) will have the whole speech a playful irony on the Lord's part, who would show Peter the impossible payment to which he has pledged Him, when money they had none in hand; as though He had said, "The next thing which you had better do is to go and catch us a fish, and find in it the piece of money which is to pay this tax for which you have engaged,"—not that he should actually do this, but as a slight and kindly rebuke. It was reserved for the more modern or mythic school of interpreters to find other difficulties here, besides the general one of there being a miracle at all. "How," exclaims Strauss (*Leben Jesu*, vol. ii. p. 195), "could the fish retain the stater in its mouth? the coin must needs have dropped out while it was opening its jaws to swallow the hook; and, moreover, it is not in the *mouths*, but in the *bellies*, of fishes that precious things are found." He might have urged that a Christian poet, Juveneūs, conscious of this difficulty, attempts to evade it, giving the *ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα* with this variation: *Hujus pandantur seissi penetralia ventris.* Such is the objection against which this history is to prove too weak to stand! It can only be matched with the objection which another makes to the historic truth of Daniel in the lions' den; namely, that if a stone was laid at the mouth of the den (Dan. vi. 17), the lions must needs have been suffocated,—so that nothing will satisfy him but that the den's mouth must have been by this stone hermetically sealed!

\* So does Seb. Schmidt (*Fascie. Diss.* p. 796). Chrysostom (*Hom. lxxxvii. in Joh.*) accounts in like manner for the fish which the disciples find ready upon the shore (John xxi. 9); and some will have that Christ not merely gave sight to, but made organs of vision for, the man who was born blind (John ix.).

water at Cana; it quickened and revived, as Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus; it brought together, as here, by wonderful coincidences, the already existing; but, as far as our records reach, it formed no new limbs; it made no bread, no wine, out of nothing; it created no new men: never passed over on any one occasion into the region of absolute creation.\*

The allegorical interpretations, or rather uses, of this miracle, for they are seldom intended for more, have not in them much to attract, neither that of Clement of Alexandria,† that each skilful “fisher of men” will, like Peter, remove the coin of pride and avarice and luxury, from the mouth of them whom he has drawn up by the hook of the Gospel from the waste waters of the world; nor yet that which St. Ambrose brings forward, wherein the stater plays altogether a different, indeed an opposite, part;‡ nor has Augustine's§ more to draw forth our assent. It is superfluous to press further a miracle already so rich in meaning as this approves itself to be.

\* The accounts are numerous of precious things found in the bellies of fishes. The story of Polyerates' ring is well known (*Herodotus*, iii. 42); and in Jewish legend Solomon, having lost his ring of power, recovered it in the same unexpected way (*Eisenmenger, Entdeckt. Judenth.* vol. i. p. 360). Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 8) records a like incident in his own day, in which he sees a providential dealing of God to answer the prayer, and supply the need, of one of his servants.

† *Pedag.* ii. vol. i. p. 172, Potter's ed.; cf. Origen, *Comm. in Matt.* for the same.

‡ *Heracl. v. 6*: Ideo misit retia, et complexus est Stephanum, qui de Evangelio primus ascendit [*τὸν ἀναβάντα πρῶτον*] habens in ore suo statarem justitiae. Unde confessione constanti clamavit, dicens: Ecce video cœlos apertos, et Filium hominis stantem ad dexteram Dei. So Hilary, *Comm. in Matt.* in loc.

§ *Enarr. in Ps.* exxxvii. 8: Primum surgentem de mari, primogenitum a mortuis; for by Him, he says, with the error which runs through his whole interpretation, ab exactione *hujus seculi* liberamur.

## 29. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

JOHN xi. 1-54.

**I**T must always remain a mystery why this miracle, so memorable in itself, transcending as it does all other miracles which the Lord wrought, so weighty in its consequences (John xi. 33), should have been past over by the three earlier Evangelists, and left for the latest to record. The utmost that can be hoped is to suggest some probable solution. Thus, it has been urged by some, by Grotius and by Olshausen, that the three earlier Evangelists, writing in Palestine, and while either Lazarus or some of his family yet survived, would not willingly draw attention, and, it might be, persecution, upon them (see John xii. 10); but that no such causes hindered St. John, who wrote at a much later period, and not in Palestine, but in Asia Minor, from bringing forward this miracle. The omission on their part, and the mention upon his, will then be a parallel to a like omission and mention of the name of the disciple who smote off the ear of the High Priest's servant, only St. John mentioning that it was Peter who struck the blow (xviii. 10). But how far-fetched an explanation is this! At the utmost it would account only for the silence of St. Matthew; not for St. Mark's, whose Gospel was probably written at Rome; for St. Luke's as little, who wrote for his friend Theophilus, whom many intimations make us conclude to have lived in Italy. Moreover, the existence of danger to Lazarus or his family, while the miracle and the impression of the miracle were yet fresh, is of itself not the slightest evidence that such existed long years after. The tide of events had swept onward; new objects of hostility had arisen: not to say that if there *was* danger, and such danger as the mention of the great work wrought on him would have enhanced, yet Lazarus was now a Christian, and would as little have himself shrunk, as those who loved him would have de-

sired to withdraw him, from the post of honourable peril. For what else would it have been, but to shrink from confessing Christ, to have desired that a work which revealed so much of the glory of the Lord should remain untold, lest some persecution or danger might from the telling accrue to himself, or to those dear to him? Others, as Neander, feeling the insufficiency of this explanation, have observed how the three earlier Evangelists report few save the miracles that the Lord wrought in Galilee, leaving those wrought in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood nearly untouched, and that so they omitted this.\* This is perfectly true; but is no explanation, only a re-stating in other words of the fact which needs to be explained; and the question still remains, *Why* they should have done so? and to this it is difficult to find now the satisfactory answer. This much we may freely say, while, at the same time, we feel the objections against the historic worth either of St. John, or of the three first Evangelists, drawn from *his* insertion, and *their* omission, of this miracle, to have little seriousness in them.

In the house of Martha at Bethany,\* for St. Luke (x. 38) speaks of her as if alone the mistress of the house, the Lord had often found a hospitable reception; and not in the house only, He had found too a place in the hearts of the united and happy family which abode under that roof;

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\* *Leben Jesu*, p. 357.

† Stanley (*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 186): “Bethany, a wild mountain hamlet, screened by an intervening ridge from the view of the top of Olivet, perched on its broken plateau of rock, the last collection of human habitations before the desert hills which reach to Jericho,—this is the modern village of El-Lazarich, which derives its name from its clustering round the traditional site of the one house and grave which give it an undying interest. High in the distance are the Perea mountains; the foreground is the deep descent to the Jordan valley. On the further side of that dark abyss Martha and Mary knew that Christ was abiding when they sent their messengers; up that long ascent they had often watched His approach; up that long ascent He came when, outside the village, Martha and Mary met Him, and the Jews stood round weeping.”

and He loved with a distinguishing human affection “*Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.*”\* To Bethany, after the day’s task was over in the unfriendly city, He was often wont to retire for the night (Mark xi. 11-19); its immediate nearness to the city allowing Him to return thither betimes in the morning. And in the circle of this family, with Mary, who “sat at his feet and heard his word,” with Martha, only hindered from the same assiduous hearing by her desire to pay as much outward observance as she could to her divine guest, with Lazarus his “*friend,*” we may contemplate Him as often wont to find rest and refreshment, after a day spent amid the contradiction of sinners, and among the men who daily mistook and wrested his words.

But they whom Christ loves are no more exempt than others from their share of earthly trouble and anguish; rather are they bound over to it the more surely. There is sorrow and a fearful looking for of a still greater sorrow in that household; Lazarus is sick; and the sisters in their need turn to Him whom they may have themselves already proved to be a helper in every time of trouble, whom at any rate they have beheld to be such in the extremest need of others. He is at a distance, beyond Jordan, probably at Bethabara,

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\* Here, as throughout the Evangelical history, there is an exceeding scantiness in all the circumstantial notices concerning the persons mentioned; that only being related which was absolutely necessary to make the history intelligible; and all attention being directed to the portraying of the spiritual life and what bore upon this. Whether Martha may have been an early widow, with whom her sister and Lazarus, a younger brother, resided, or what may have been the constitution of the household, it is impossible to determine.—I cannot at all consent with Mr. Greswell’s ingenious Essay, *On the village of Martha and Mary* (*Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 545), of which the aim is to prove that in St. John’s designation of Lazarus, ἀπὸ Βηθαρίας means one thing, the present place of his residence, and ἐκ τῆς κούρης Μαρίας καὶ Μάρθας another, the village of his birth, which he accounts to have been some Galilean village, where the Lord had before been entertained by the sisters (Luke x. 38), and from whence they had migrated to Bethany, during the later period of his ministry. Such a change of preposition without a change of meaning is by no means unusual in Greek; see Kühner, *Gramm.* vol. ii. p. 319.

having withdrawn thither from the malice of his adversaries (John x. 39, 40; cf. i. 28); but the place of his concealment, or retirement rather, is known to the friendly family, and they send a messenger with these tidings, “*Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.*” Very beautiful is it to observe their confidence in Him; they do not urge Him to come, but only tell their need; this, they take for granted, will be sufficient; for He does not love, and forsake them whom He loves.\* It is but a day’s journey from Bethabara to Bethany; they may securely count that help will not tarry long.

“*When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death.*”† The words are purposely enigmatical, and must greatly have tried the faith of the sisters. For by the time that the messenger brought them back, it is probable that Lazarus was already dead. Sorely therefore must this confident assurance of quite another issue have perplexed them. Could it be that their divine Friend had deceived them, or had been Himself deceived? Why had He not made the issue certain by Himself coming; or, if aught had hindered this, by speaking that word which even at a distance was effectual to heal, which He had spoken for others, for those that were well nigh strangers to Him, and had saved them? But, as with so many other of the divine promises, which seem to us for the moment to come to nothing and utterly to fail, and this because we so little dream of the resources of the Divine love, and are ever limiting them by our knowledge of them, so was it with this word,—a perplexing riddle, till the event had made it plain. Even now, in the eyes of Him who saw the end from the beginning, that sickness was “*not unto death;*” as they too should acknowledge, when they should find that through the grave and gate

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xl.*): Non dixerunt, Veni. Amanti enim tantummodo nuntiandum fuit. . . . Sufficit ut noveris; non enim amas et deseris.

† Πρὸς θάνατον. So 1 John v. 16; cf. 1 Kin. xvii. 17; and 2 Kin. xx. 1 (LXX), where of Hezekiah it is said, ἡρρώστησεν εἰς θάνατον.

of death their brother had past at once to a restored and higher life than any which he yet had lived. For this, I think, we may confidently assume, that it *was* a higher life to which Lazarus was recalled. That sickness of his was "*for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby;*" but in this "*glory of God*" was included the perfecting for Lazarus of his own spiritual being, as we cannot doubt that it *was* perfected through these wondrous events of his existence. In them was his hard yet blessed passage into life; while at the same time that which was the decisive crisis in his spiritual development was also a signal moment in the gradual revelation of the glory of Christ unto the world. The Son of God was first glorified *in Lazarus*, and then *on and through him to the world* (compare the exact parallel, John ix. 2, 3).

Some would connect ver. 5, "*Now Jesus loved\* Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus,*" with what goes before, making it to contain an explanation of the message, and of the ready confidence which the sisters entertain in the Lord's help; some with the verse following; and then St. John will be bringing out into the strongest contrast the Lord's love to the distressed family at Bethany, and his tarrying notwithstanding for two days where He was, even after the message claiming his help had reached Him. The Evangelist will in this latter case be suggesting to the thoughtful reader all that is involved in this love, which waited so long, ere it would step in to save. But Maldonatus, as it seems to me, has caught a truer view of the sequence of thought, connecting this verse not with the *one*, but with the *two* which follow. He understands St. John to say: Jesus loved Martha and the others; when therefore He heard that Lazarus was sick, He abode indeed two days where He was, but "*then after that saith He*

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\* Ἐγάπα here; but φιλεῖς, ver. 3. This last word might well be used in regard of Christ's love to the brother; but it would have been contrary to the fine decorum of language to use it now that the sisters are included in his love.

*to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.*" To conceive any other reason for his tarrying where He was during those two days, than that He might have scope for that great miracle, as, for example, that He had in hand some signal work for the kingdom of God where He was, such as would not endure interruption, which therefore He could not quit for the most urgent calls of private friendship, is extremely unnatural (see x. 41, 42). Had He only been so determined, He, who could heal with his word at a distance as easily as by his actual presence, would not have failed so to do. This tarrying was rather a part of the severe yet gracious discipline of divine love. The need must attain to the highest, before He interferes. It is often thus. He intervenes with mighty help, but not till every other help, not until, to the weak faith of man, even his own promise has seemed utterly to have failed.

But now, when all things are ready for Him, "*He saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again.*" The wondering and trembling disciples remonstrate; "*Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?*" The necessity of hiding from their active malice had brought Him to those safer haunts beyond Jordan, and will He now affront that danger anew? In these remonstrances of theirs there spake out truest love to Him; but mingled with this love apprehensions for their own safety, as is revealed in the words of Thomas (ver. 16), who takes it for granted that to return with Him is to die with Him. To keep this in mind, will best help us to understand the answer of the Lord: "*Are there not twelve hours in the day?*" or, rather, "*Are not the hours of the day twelve? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world,*"—in other words, "*Is there not a time which is not cut short or abridged by premature darkness, but consists of twelve full hours,\* during any part of which a man may walk and work*

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\* Maldonatus: Certum esse atque statum spatium diei, *quod*

without stumbling, being enlightened by the light of this world, by the natural sun in the heavens? Such an unconcluded day there is now for Me, a day during any part of which I can safely accomplish the work given Me by my Father, whose light I, in like manner, behold.\* So long as the day, the time appointed by my Father for my earthly walk, endures, so long as there is any work for Me yet to do, I am safe, and you are safe in my company.” We may profitably compare the very similar words spoken under similar circumstances of danger, John ix. 4. And then, at ver. 10, leaving all allusion to Himself, and contemplating his disciples alone, He links another thought to this, and warns them that they never walk otherwise than as seeing Him who is the Light of men,—they never walk as in the night,—they undertake no task, they affront no danger, unless looking to Him, unless they can say, “The Lord is my Light;” for so to do were to involve themselves in sure peril and temptation. The final words which explain why such a walker in the night should stumble, “*because there is no light in him,*” are a forsaking of the figure, which would have required something of this kind, “*there is no light above him;*” but in the spiritual world it is one and the same thing not to see the light above us, and not to have it in us; for they only have it in them who see it above them (cf. 1 John ii. 8-11).

“*These things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend† Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him*

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*minui non possit;* duodecim euim constare horis; intra id spatium si quis ambulat, sine periculo ambulare. Calvin: Vocatio Dei instar lucis diurnæ est, quæ nos errare vel impingere non patitur. Quis quis ergo Dei verbo obtemperat, nec quidquam aggreditur nisi ejus jussu, illum quoque habere cœlo ducem et directorem, et hæc fiducia secure et intrepide viam arripere potest. Cf. Ps. xc. 11. Grotius: Quanto ergo magis tuto ambulo, qui prælucuentem mihi habeo lucem supracœlestem, ac divinam cognitionem Paterni propositi?

\* Bengel: Jam multa erat hora, sed tamen adhuc erat dies.

† Bengel, on the words ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν: Quantâ humanitate Jesus amicitiam suam cum discipulis communicat.

*out of sleep.*" We are not to suppose that the Lord receives new and later tidings from the house of sickness, announcing that it is now the house of death, nor thus to explain the new communication which He makes to his disciples. By the inner power of his spirit He knows how it has fared with his friend. In language how simple does He speak of the mighty work which He is about to accomplish; language which shall rather extenuate than enhance its greatness: it is but as a sleep and an awaking. The disciples, however, misunderstood his words, and thought that He spake of natural sleep, an indication often of a favourable crisis in a disorder. Eagerly seizing upon any excuse for not returning as into the lion's jaws, they assume it such here: "*Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.*"\* What need then that their beloved Lord should expose Himself, and with Himself them, to peril, when his presence was not required, when all was going favourably forward without Him? "*Then saith Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*" The image of death as a sleep is so common, belongs so to the natural symbolism of all nations, that it was no difficulty in the image itself which occasioned the misunderstanding upon their part; but, while it was equally possible for them to take his words in a figurative or in a literal sense, they erroneously took them in the latter.† They make an exactly

\* So Chrysostom, and Grotius: *Discipuli omnimodo quærunt Dominum ab isto itinere avocare. Ideo omnibus utuntur argumentis.*

† The use of the term *κοιμᾶσθαι* in this sense is abundantly frequent in the Old T., and not less in the New, as Matt. xxvii. 52; Acts vii. 60; xiii. 36; 1 Cor. vii. 39; xi. 30; xv. 6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, 15; 2 Pet. iii. 4. So we have *κοιμησις* for the sleep of death, Eeclus. xlvi. 19. There is but one example of a use of *ἔξυπνίζειν*, similar to the present, namely, in the remarkable passage, Job xiv. 12: "Ανθρωπος δὲ κοιμηθεὶς οὐ μὴν ἀναστῆ ἔως ἂν ὁ οὐρανὸς οὐ μὴ συρράφῃ, καὶ οὐκ ἔξυπνισθήσονται ἐξ ὑπνου αὐτῶν." The nearest motive to this image may probably have been the likeness of a dead body to one sleeping. Yet there may well lie in it a deeper thought, of the state of the dead being that of a sleep—not indeed a dreamless sleep; but the separation of the soul from the body, as the appointed and

similar mistake, though one involving a greater lack of spiritual insight, Matt. xvi. 5-12. "*And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe.*" He anticipates what could hardly not have risen up in their minds, namely, why He had not been there to save. Through that absence of his there should be a higher revelation of the glory of God than could have been from his earlier presence; a revelation that should lead them, and in them all the Church, to higher stages of faith, to a deeper recognition of Himself, as the Lord of life and of death. He is glad, for his disciples' sake, that it thus had befallen; for had He been upon the spot, He could not have suffered the distress of those so dear to Him to reach the highest point, but must have interfered at an earlier moment.

When He summons them now to go, "*nevertheless, let us go unto him,*" it is plain that for one disciple at least the anticipation of death, as the certain consequence of this perilous journey, is not overcome. In the words of Thomas to his fellow-disciples,\* "*Let us also go, that we may die with Him,*" there is a remarkable mixture of faith and unfaithfulness,—faith, since he counted it better to die with his Lord than to live forsaking Him,—unfaithfulness, since he conceived it possible that so long as his Lord had a work to accomplish, He or any under the shield of his presence could be overtaken by any peril which should require them to die together. Thomas was, most probably, of a melancholic desponding

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indeed necessary organ of its activity, may and must bring about, not a suspension, but a depression, of the consciousness. Wherefore the state of the soul apart from the body is never considered in the Scripture as itself desirable, nor as other than a state of transition, the Scripture acknowledging no true immortality apart from the resurrection of the body (see Olshausen, *in loc.*).

\* Συμαθητής, a ἄπαξ λεγόμενον in the N. T., occurs once in Plato, *Euthyd.* 272 c. Grotius makes μετ' αὐτοῦ, with Lazarus; but ἀποθανεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ, as Maldonatus well brings out, indicates fellowship not merely in death, but *in dying*, which was impossible in the case of Lazarus, who was already dead. I know no other interpreter who shares this error.

character; most true to his Master, yet ever inclined to look at things on their darkest side, finding it most hard to raise himself to the loftier elevations of faith,—to believe other and more than he saw (John xiv. 5 ; xx. 25), or to anticipate more favourable issues than those which the earthly probabilities of an event promised.\* Men of all temperaments and all characters were within that first and nearest circle of disciples, that they might be the representatives and helpers of all that hereafter, through one difficulty and another, should attain at last to the full assurance of faith. Very beautifully Chrysostom† says of this disciple, that he who now would hardly venture to go *with* Jesus as far as to the neighbouring Bethany, afterwards *without* Him travelled to the ends of the world, to the furthest India, daring all the perils of remote and hostile nations.

Martha and Mary would have scarcely ventured to claim help from the Lord, till the sickness of their brother had assumed an alarming character; he probably had died upon the same day that the messenger announcing his illness had reached the Lord; scarcely otherwise would He have found when He came, “*that he had lain in the grave four days already.*” The day of the messenger’s arrival on this calculation would be one day; two our Lord abode in Peræa after He had dismissed him; and one more,—for it was not more than the journey of a single day,—He would have employed in the journey from thence to Bethany. Dying upon that day, Lazarus, according to the custom of the Jews, that burial should immediately follow on death (Acts v. 6-10), had

\* Maldonatus: Theodor. Mopsuest., Chrys., et Euthymius recte fortasse indicant haec verba, quamvis magnam audaciae speciem præ se ferant, non audacis sed timidi esse hominis, amantis tamen Christum, a quo cum certum mortis, ut putabat, periculum avellere non posset. Bengel: Erat quasi medius inter hanc vitam et mortem, sine tristitia et sine lætitia paratus ad moriendum; non tamen sine fide.

† In Joh. Hom. Ixii.

been buried upon the same, as a comparison of this verse with ver. 39 clearly shows.

But before the arrival of Him, the true Comforter, other comforters, some formal, all weak, had arrived. The nearness of Bethany to Jerusalem, which is therefore noticed here, will have made these the more numerous. "*Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off;*" that is, about two miles; "*and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary,\* to comfort them concerning their brother,*" gathered at the house of mourning by the providence of God, who would have many witnesses and heralds of this mightiest of the wondrous works of his Son. It was part of the Jewish ceremonial of grief, which was all most accurately defined,† that there should be numerous visits of condolence, a large gathering of friends and acquaintance, not less than ten, as in the case of a marriage company, round those that were mourning for their dead (1 Chron. vii. 22); sometimes, and on the part of some, a reality; yet oftentimes a dry and heartless formality on the one side, as a burden most heavy to bear, an aggravation of grief, on the other. Job's comforters give witness how little true sympathy sometimes existed with the sufferer. At times, too, it was a bitter mockery, when the very authors of the grief professed to be the comforters in it (Gen. xxxvii. 35). But now *He* comes, who could indeed comfort the mourners, and wipe away tears from their eyes. Yet He comes not to the house; that had been already filled by "*the Jews,*" by those who were for the most part alien, if not hos-

\* Αἱ περὶ Μάρθαν καὶ Μαριὰν, to signify Martha and Mary themselves and no other, is a Grecism of the finer sort, familiar to all. Olshausen and others, not denying this, yet find in the phrase here, that before the mourners from the remoter Jerusalem had arrived, there had already assembled some such, of their own sex, probably of their own kin, from Bethany itself, to whom the later coming joined themselves; cf. Acts xiii. 13: οἱ περὶ τὸν Παῦλον, "Paul and his company."

† The days of mourning were thirty: of these the three first were days of weeping (fletus); then followed seven of lamentation (planc-tus); the remaining twenty of mourning (mæror).

tile, to Him; for almost as often as this term “the Jews” occurs in St. John, hostility to Christ is implied in it. Not amid the disturbing influences of that uncongenial circle shall his first interview with the sorrowing sisters find place. Probably He tarried outside the town, and not very far from the spot where Lazarus was buried, else when Mary went to meet Him, the Jews could scarcely have said, “*She goeth unto the grave to weep there*” (ver. 31). From thence He may have suffered the tidings to go before Him that He was at hand.

When we read that “*Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him; but Mary sat still in the house,*” we are not, in this hastening of the one and tarrying of the other, to trace, as many have done, the different characteristics of the two sisters, or to find a parallel here to Luke x. 39. For on that former occasion, when Mary chose to sit still, she did so because it was at “*Jesus' feet*” that she was sitting; this nearness to Him, and not the sitting still, was then the attraction. The same motives which then kept her in stillness there, would now have brought her on swiftest wings of love to the place where the Master was. Moreover, so soon as ever she did hear that her Lord was come and called for her, “*she arose quickly, and came unto Him*” (ver. 29). “It was not,” to use Chrysostom’s words, “that Martha was now more zealous; but Mary had not heard.” This much characteristic of the two sisters there may very probably be in the narrative, namely, that Martha, engaged in active employments even in the midst of her grief, may have been more in the way of hearing what was happening in the outer world, while Mary, in her deeper and stiller anguish, was sitting retired in the house, and less within the reach of such rumours.\*

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\* Maldonatus: Quia enim dixerat Martham obviam Christo processisse, ne quis miraretur, aut Marium accusaret quod non et ipsa processisset, excusat eam tacite, dicens sedisse domi, ideoque nihil de Christi adventu cognovisse. Martha enim cognovit, quia credibile

I know not whether it is an accident of the narrative, fuller at one place than at the other, or whether it belongs to the characteristic touches which escape us at the first glance, but of which Scripture is so full, that nothing should be said of Martha falling at the Lord's feet, while this is noted of her sister (ver. 32). Martha too is ready to change words with Christ; but the deeper anguish of Mary finds utterance in that one phrase, the one thought which was uppermost in the heart of both: "*Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;*" and then she is silent. For it is the bitterest drop in their cup of anguish, that all this might have been otherwise. Had this sickness befallen at another moment, when Christ was nearer, had He been able to hasten to their aid as soon as He was summoned, all might have been averted; they might have been rejoicing in a living, instead of mourning over a dead, brother. Yet even now Martha has not altogether renounced every hope, though she ventures only at a distance to allude to this hope which she is cherishing still. "*But I know that even now,*" now when the grave has closed upon him, "*whatsoever Thou wilt ask\* of God, God will give it Thee.*" High thoughts and poor thoughts of Christ mingle here together;—high thoughts, in that she sees Him as one whose effectual fervent prayers will greatly prevail;—poor thoughts, in that she thinks of Him as *obtaining* by prayer that which indeed He *has* by the oneness of his nature with God.†

With words purposely ambiguous, being meant for the trying of her faith, Jesus assures her that the deep, though

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est domo aliquâ causâ fuisse progressam, et solent qui foris in publico versantur, multos colligere rumores, quos ignorant, qui domi delitescunt.

\* She uses the word *alτεῖν* (*ὅσα ἀν αἰτήσῃ*), a word never used by our Lord to express his own asking of the Father, but always *ἐρωτᾶν*: for there is a certain familiarity, nay authority, in his askings, which *ἐρωτᾶν* expresses, but *alτεῖν* would not; see my *Synonyms of the N. T.*, § 40.

† Grotius: Et hic infirmitas appetet. Putat illum gratiosum esse apud Deum, non autem in illo esse plenitudinem Divinæ potestatis.

unuttered, longing of her heart shall indeed be granted : “*Thy brother shall rise again.*” But though her heart could take in the desire for so great a boon, it cannot take in its actual granting (cf. Acts xii. 5, 15); it shrinks back half in unbelief from the receiving of it. She cannot believe that these words mean more than that he, with all other faithful Israelites, will stand in his lot at the last day; and with a slight movement of impatience at such cold comfort, comfort that so little met the present longings of her heart, which were to have her brother now, she answers, “*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*” Her love was as yet earthly, clinging passionately to the earthly objects of its affection, but needing to be infinitely exalted and purified. Unless the Lord had lifted her into a higher region of life, it would have profited her little that He had granted her heart’s desire.\* What would it have helped her to receive back her brother, if again she were presently to lose him, if once more they were to be parted asunder by his death or her own? This lower boon would only prove a boon at all, if he and she were both made partakers of a higher life in Christ; then, indeed, death would have no more power over them, then they would truly possess one another, and for ever: and to this the wondrously deep and loving words of Christ would lead her. They are no unseasonable preaching of truths remote from her present needs, but the answer to the very deepest need of her soul; they would lead her from a lost brother to a present Saviour, a Saviour in whom alone that brother could be truly and for ever found. “*Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life;* the true Life, the true Resurrection; the everlasting triumphs over death, they are *in Me*—no remote benefits, as thou speakest of now,

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\* This is the great thought of Wordsworth’s *Laodamia*. She who gives her name to that sublime poem does not lift herself, she has none to lift her, into those higher regions in which the return of the beloved would be a blessing and a boon; and thus it proves to her a joyless, disappointing gift, presently again to be snatched away.

to find place *at the last day*; no powers separate or separable from Me, as thou spakest of lately, when thou desiredst that I should ask of Another that which I possess evermore in Myself. In Me is victory over the grave, in Me is life eternal: by faith in Me that becomes yours which makes death not to be death, but only the transition to a better life."

Such, I cannot doubt, is the general meaning and scope of these glorious words. When we ask ourselves what the title "*The Resurrection*," which Christ ascribes to Himself, involves, we perceive that in one aspect it is something more, in another something less, than that other title of "*The Life*," which He also challenges for his own. It is more, for it is life in conflict with and overcoming death; it is life being the death of death, meeting it in its highest manifestation, that of physical dissolution and decay, and vanquishing it there. It is less, for so long as that title belongs to Him, it implies something still undone, a mortality not yet wholly swallowed up in life, a last enemy not yet wholly destroyed and put under his feet (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26). As He is "*the Resurrection*" of the dead, so is He "*the Life*" of the living—absolute life, having life in Himself, for so it has been given Him of the Father (John v. 26), the one fountain of life;\* so that all who receive not life from Him pass into the state of death, first the death of the spirit, and then, as the completion of their death, the death also of the body.

The words following, "*He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die,*" are not obscure in the sum total of their meaning; yet so to interpret them, as to prevent the two clauses of the sentence from appearing to contain a repetition, and to find progress in them, is not easy. If we compare this passage with John vi. 32-59, and observe the

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\* Ὁ ζῶν (Rev. i. 8); ὁ ζωποιῶν (Rom. iv. 17); ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν (Col. iii. 4); παγῆ ζωῆς (Ps. xxxv. 9); ὁ μόνος ἔχων τὴν ἀθανασίαν (1 Tim. vi. 16).

repeated stress which is there laid on the raising up at the last day, as the great quickening work of the Son of God (ver. 39, 40, 44, 54), we shall not hesitate to make the declaration, "*yet shall he live,*" in the first clause here, to be equivalent to the words, "*I will raise him up at the last day,*" there, and this whole first clause will then be the unfolding of the words, "*I am the Resurrection;*" as such He will rescue every one that believeth on Him from death and the grave. In like manner, the second clause answers to, and is the expansion of, the more general declaration, "*I am the Life;*" that is, "*Whosoever liveth, every one that draweth the breath of life and believeth upon Me, shall know the power of an everlasting life, shall never truly die.*" Here, as so often in our Lord's words, the temporal death is taken no account of, but quite overlooked, and the believer in Him is contemplated as already lifted above death, and made partaker of everlasting life (John vi. 47).\*

Having claimed all this for Himself, He demands of Martha whether she can receive it: "*Believest thou this,—that I am this Lord of life and of death? Doth thy faith in the divine verities of the resurrection and eternal life after death centre in Me?*" Her answer, "*Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world,*" is perhaps more direct than at first sight it appears. For one of the offices of Christ the Messiah was, according to the Jewish expectations, to raise the dead; and thus, confessing Him to be the Christ, she implicitly confessed Him also to be the quickener of the dead. Or she may mean,—"*I believe all glorious things concerning Thee; there is nought which I do not believe concerning Thee, since I believe Thee to be Him in whom every glorious gift for the world is centred,*"—speaking like one whose faith, as that of most persons at all times must be, was implicit rather than explicit: she did

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\* Bengel: *Mors Christi mortem enervavit. Post mortem Christi mors credentium non est mors.*

not know all which that name, “*the Christ, the Son of God,*” involved, but all which it did involve she was ready to believe.

She says no more; for now she will make her sister partaker of the joyful tidings that He, the long waited for, long desired, is arrived at last. Some good thing too, it may be, she expects from his high and mysterious words, though she knows not precisely what: a ray of comfort has found its way into her heart, and she would fain make her sister a sharer in this. Yet she told not her tidings openly, suspecting, and having good cause to suspect (ver. 46), that some of their visitors from Jerusalem might be of unfriendly disposition towards the Lord. “*She called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*” This, that He had asked for Mary, we had not learned from the previous account. “*As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him.*” The Jews take it for granted that she is hastening in a paroxysm of her grief to the grave, that she may weep there; as it was the custom of Jewish women often to visit the graves of their kindred,\* and this especially during the first days of their mourning;—and they follow; for thus was it provided of God that this miracle should have many witnesses. “*Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at his feet,† saying, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.*” The words with which her sister had greeted the Lord thus repeating themselves a second time from her lips, give us a glimpse of all that had passed in that mournful house, since the beloved was laid in earth: often during that four days’ interval the sisters had said one to the other, how different the issues might have been, if the divine friend had been with them.

\* Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. iv. p. 281; Geier, *De Luctu Hebraeorum*, vii. § 26.

† Compare Cicero’s account of his first interview with a Sicilian mother whom the lust and cruelty of Verres had made desolate (*In Verr. v. 39*): *Mihi obviam venit, et ita me suam salutem appellans, filii nomen implorans, mihi ad pedes misera jacuit, quasi ego excitare filium ejus ab inferis possem.*

Such had been the one thought in the hearts, the one word upon the lips, of both, and therefore was so naturally the first spoken by each, and that altogether independently of the other. This is indeed one of the finer traits of the narrative.

At the spectacle of all this grief, the sisters weeping, and even the more indifferent visitors from Jerusalem weeping likewise, the Lord also "*groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.*"\* The word which we translate "*groaned*"† does

\* An emphasis has been laid on the ἐτάραξεν ξαυτόν, turbavit se ipsum; thus by Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xlix.*): Quis enim eum posset nisi se ipse turbare? (cf. *De Civ. Dei*, xiv. 9, 3); and by Bengel: Affectus Jesu non fuere passiones, sed voluntariae commotiones, quas plane in suā potestate habebat; et hæc turbatio fuit plena ordinis et rationis summæ. It would then express something of the μετριοπάθεια of the Academy, as opposed on the one side to frantic outbreaks of grief, on the other to the ἀπάθεια of the Stoics. His grief no doubt did keep this mean; but this active ἐτάραξεν ξαυτόν must not be pressed; since elsewhere, on similar occasions, we have the passive, ἐταράχθη τῷ πνεύματι (John xiii. 21): cf. xii. 27, with which this is in fact identical.

† Ἐμβριμάομαι (from βρίμη, Βριμώ, a name of Persephone or Hecate, and signifying The Angered, so called διὰ τὸ φοβερὸν καὶ καταπληκτικὸν τοῦ δαίμονος, Lucian; and cognate with fremo, βρίθως, φριμάω) does not mean to be moved with *any* strong passion, as grief or fear, but always implies something of anger and indignation. See Passow, s. v., who knows no other signification; and in like manner all the Greek interpreters upon this passage, however they might differ concerning the cause of the indignation, yet found indignation here expressed. The Vulgate rightly: infremuit; and Luther: Er ergrimmame im Geiste. Storr then has right when he says (*Opusc. Acad. vol. iii. p. 254*): Quem vulgo sumunt *tristitia* significatum, is plane incertus esse videtur, cum nullo, quod sciamus, exemplo confirmari possit, Græcisque patribus tam valde ignotus fuerit, ut materiam ad succensendum, quamvis non repartam in Mariæ et comitum ejus ploratu, quærerent certe in humanæ naturæ (*τῆς σαρκός*) Jesu propensione ad tristitiam, quam Jesus . . . increpaverit (see Suiccer, *Thes. s. v.*). The other passages in the N. T. where this word is used bear out this meaning. Twice it is used of our Lord *commanding, under the threat of his earnest displeasure*, those whom He had healed to keep silence (Matt. ix. 30; Mark i. 43); and once of those who were indignant at what Mary had done in the matter of the ointment (*καὶ ἐνέβριμωντο αὐτὴν*, Mark xiv. 5). Compare the use of ἐμβριμᾶσθαι, Isai. xvii. 13 (Symmachus) and Ps. xxxviii. 4 (Symm. and Aquila), and ἐμβρίμημα ὄργῆς, Jer. ii. 8 (LXX). It is nothing but the diffi-

indeed far rather express the feelings of indignation and displeasure than of grief, which, save as a certain amount of it is contained in all displeasure, it means not at all. But at what and with whom was Jesus thus indignant? The notion of some Greek expositors,\* that He was indignant with Himself for these stirrings of pity, these human tears,—that the word expresses the inward struggle to repress, as something weak and unworthy, these rising utterances of grief,—is not to be accepted for an instant. Christianity knows of no such dead Stoicism; it demands a regulating, but no such repressing, of the natural affections; on the contrary, it bids us to “weep with them that weep” (Rom. xii. 15); and, in the beautiful words of Leighton, that we “seek not altogether to dry the stream of sorrow, but to bound it, and keep it within its banks.” Some, as Theodore of Mopsuestia and Lampe, suppose Him indignant in spirit at the hostile dispositions which He already traced and detected among the Jews that were present, the unbelief on their part with which He foresaw that great work of his would be received. Others, that his indignation was excited by the unbelief of Martha and Mary and the others, which they manifested in their weeping, whereby they showed clearly that they did not believe that He would raise their dead. But He Himself wept presently, and there was nothing in these their natural tears to have rouscd a feeling of the kind.

Much better is it to take this as the indignation which the Lord of life felt at all which sin had wrought: He beheld

culty of finding a satisfactory object for the indignation of the Lord, which has caused so many modern commentators to desert this explanation, and make the word simply and merely an expression of grief and anguish of spirit. Lampe and Kuinoel defend the right explanation; and Lange (*Theol. Stud. und Krit.* 1836, p. 714, seq.) has many beautiful remarks in an essay wherein he seeks to unite both meanings; but by far the completest discussion on the word *ἐμβρυάσθαι*, and its exact meaning here, is to be found in a later number of these same *Studien*, 1862, pp. 260-268.

\* See Suicer, *Thes.* s. v. *ἐμβριάσματι*.

death in all its fearfulness, as the wages of sin ; the woes of a whole world, of which this was but a little sample, rose up before his eye ; all its mourners and all its graves were present to Him. For that He was about to wipe away the tears of those present did not truly alter the case. Lazarus rose again, but only to taste a second time the bitterness of death ; these mourners He might comfort, but only for a little while ; these tears He might stanch, only again hereafter to flow ; and how many had flowed and must flow with no such Comforter to wipe them, even for a season, away. Contemplating all this, a mighty indignation at the author of all this woe possessed his heart. And now He will delay no longer, but will do battle with him, and show in a present, though as yet an incomplete, triumph over him, some preludes of his future victory.\* With this feeling He demands, “*Where have ye laid him ? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept ;*”† or perhaps it would have been more accurately ren-

\* Apollinarius : ‘Ωσεί τις γενναῖος ἀριστεὺς τοὺς πολεμίους ιδὼν, ἐαυτὸν παρώξυνε κατὰ τῶν ἀντιπάλων.

† We may compare, for purposes of contrast, the words of Artemis in that majestic concluding scene in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, where, in the midst of his misery, Hippolytus asks,

‘Ορᾶς με, δέσποιν’, ὡς ἔχω, τὸν ἄθλιον ;

and she answers,

‘Ορῶ, κατ’ ὅσσων δ’ οὐ θέμις βαλεῖν δάκρυν.

Full as is that scene of soothing and elevating power, and even of a divine sympathy, yet a God of tears was a higher conception than the heathen world could reach to. After indeed the Son of God had come, and in that strange and inexplicable way had begun to modify the whole feeling of the heathen world, long before men had even heard of his name, the Roman poet could sing in words exquisitely beautiful in themselves, and belonging to a passage among the noblest which antiquity supplies—

. . . mollissima corda  
Humani generi dare se natura fatetur,  
Quæ lacrymas dedit : *hæc nostri pars optima sensus.*  
Juv. Sat. xv.

On the sinlessness of these natural affections, or rather on their necessity for a full humanity, see Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xiv. 9, 3.

dered, “shed tears,”\* Himself borne along with, and not seeking to resist, this great tide of sorrow.

Some of the Jews present, moved to good will by this lively sympathy of the Lord with the sorrows of those around Him, exclaimed, “Behold how He loved him! And some,” or rather, “But some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?” It is an invidious question. He weeps over this calamity now, but could He not have hindered it? He who could open the eyes of the blind (they refer to the case which, through the judicial investigation that followed, had made so great a stir at Jerusalem, John ix.), could He not (by his prayer to God) have hindered that this man should have died? There was indeed in this accusation, as so often in similar cases, something contradictory; for their very assumption that He possessed such power and favour with God as would have enabled Him to stay the stroke of death, rested on the assumption of so eminent a goodness upon his part, as would have secured that his power should not have been grudgingly restrained in any case, where it would have been suitably exerted. It is characteristic of the exact truth of this narrative (although it has been brought as an argument against it), that they, dwellers in Jerusalem, should refer to this miracle which had lately occurred there (John ix.), rather than to the previous raisings from the dead, which might at first sight appear more to the point. But those, occurring at an earlier period, and in the remoter Galilee, they may very likely have only heard of by obscure report. At all events, they would not have been present to them with at all the same liveliness as was this miracle, brought into prominence by

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\* For thus the distinction between the *κλαίοντες* of the others and his *ἔδακρυσεν*, which can scarcely have been accidental, would be preserved. Elsewhere (Luke xix. 41) the *κλαίειν* is itself ascribed to Him. Here, however, as Bengel puts it well, *Lacrymatus est, non ploravit.*

the contradiction which it had roused, and the futile attempts which had been made to prove it an imposture. Yet a maker-up of the narrative from later and insecure traditions would inevitably have fallen upon those miracles of a like kind, as arguments of the power of Jesus to have accomplished this.

Meanwhile they reach the tomb, though not without another access of that indignant horror, another of those mighty shudderings, that shook the frame of the Lord of life,—so dreadful did death seem to Him who, looking *through* all its natural causes, at which we often stop short, saw it purely as the seal and token of sin; so unnatural did its usurpation appear over a race made for immortality (*Wisd.* i. 13, 14). “*Jesus therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the grave.*” This, as the whole course of the narrative shows, was without the town (ver. 30), according to the universal custom of the East (*Luke* vii. 12), which did not suffer a placing of the dead among the living.\* “*It was a cave,*” as were commonly the family vaults of the Jews; sometimes natural (*Gen.* xxiii. 9; *Judith* xvi. 23), sometimes artificial and hollowed out by man’s labour from the rock (*Isai.* xxii. 16; *Matt.* xxvii. 60), in a garden (*John* xix. 41), or in some field the possession of the family (*Gen.* xxiii. 9, 17-20; *xxxv.* 18; *2 Kin.* xxi. 13); with recesses in the sides, wherein the bodies were laid, occasionally with chambers one beyond another. “*And a stone lay upon it.*” Sometimes the entrance to these tombs was on a level; sometimes there was a descent to them by steps, as on the present occasion seems probably to have been the case. This stone, blocking up the entrance, kept aloof the beasts of prey, above all the numerous jackals, which else might have found their way into these receptacles of the dead, and torn the bodies. It was naturally of sufficient size and weight not easily to be moved away (*Mark*

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\* Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenland*, vol. iv. p. 281. In like manner the Greeks buried for the most part, and with only rare exceptions, without the walls of their cities (Becker, *Charikles*, vol. ii. p. 188).

xvi. 3). The tomb of our blessed Lord Himself, with its "door," appears rather to have had a horizontal entrance.\*

Among other slighter indications which we have that Mary and Martha were not at all among the poorest of their people, this is one, that they should possess such a family vault as this. The poor had not, and it lay not within their power to purchase in fee, portions of land to set apart for these purposes of family interment. The possession of such was a privilege of the wealthier orders; only such were thus laid in the sepulchres of their fathers.† We have another indication of the same in the large concourse of mourners, and those of the higher ranks, which assembled from Jerusalem to console the sisters in their bereavement; for even in grief that word is too often true, that "wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour" (Prov. xix. 4). The pound of ointment of spikenard, "very costly," with which Mary anointed the feet of the Saviour (John xii. 3), points the same way; and the language of the original at ver. 19, however it may mean Martha and Mary, and not those around them,‡ yet means them *as the centre of an assemblage*. Chrysostom assumes the sisters to have been high-born,§ as generally did the early interpreters; probably with right; although they lay a mistaken emphasis upon "*the town of Mary and her sister Martha*" (ver. 1), who conclude from these words that Bethany belonged to them. The Levitical law rendered, and was intended to render, any such concentration of landed property in the hands of one or two

\* See Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, s. v. Gräber.

† Becker (*Charikles*, vol. ii. p. 190) observes the same of the *μνήματα* among the Greeks. For the poorer and more numerous classes there were common burial-places, as with the Romans also. See his *Gallus*, vol. ii. p. 293; and the *Dict. of Gr. and Roman Antt.* s. v. Funus, p. 436.

‡ Τὰς περὶ Μάρθαν καὶ Μαριὰν. Lampe: Nec facile occurret phrasis nisi de personis illustribus, qui amicorum aut ministrorum grege cincti erant. Colligi ergo ex eâ quoque hic potest quod Martha et Maria laetioris fortunæ fuerint.

§ Εὐγενέστεραι.

persons impossible; not to say that, by as good a right, Bethsaida might be concluded to have belonged to Andrew and Peter, for the language is exactly similar (John i. 45).

"*Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.*" Why, it may be asked, does St. John designate Martha in the next words as "*the sister of him that was dead,*" when this was abundantly plain before? Probably to account for the remonstrance of hers, which follows. She, as the sister of the dead, would naturally be more shocked than another at the thought of the exposure of that countenance, upon which corruption had already set its seal; she would most shudderingly contemplate that beloved form made a spectacle to strangers, now when it was become an abhorring even to them that had loved it best. Yet the words of her remonstrance, "*Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days,*" are scarcely, as by so many they are interpreted, an experience which she now makes, but rather a conclusion which she draws from the length of time during which the body had already lain in the grave. With the rapid decomposition that goes forward in a hot country, necessitating as it does an almost immediate burial, the "*four days*" might well have brought this about, which she fears. At the same time, it gives to this miracle almost a *monstrous* character, if we suppose it was actually the re-animating of a body which had already undergone the process of corruption. Rather He who sees the end from the beginning, and who had intended that Lazarus should live again, had watched over that body in his providence, that it should not hasten to corruption. If the poet could imagine a divine power guarding from all defeature and wrong the body which was thus preserved only for an honourable burial;\* by how much more may we assume a like preservation for that body which, not in the world of fiction, but of reality, was to become again so soon the tabernacle for the soul of one of Christ's servants. No

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\* *Iliad.* xxiv. 18-21.

conclusion of an opposite kind can be drawn from these words of Martha, being spoken, as plainly they are, *before* the stone has been removed.\*

This much, however, her words do reveal—that her faith in the Lord as able even then to quicken her dead brother had already failed. There is nothing strange in this. A weak faith, such as hers, would inevitably have these alternating ebbs and flows. All which this command to remove the stone implies for her now is a desire on the Lord's part to look once more on the countenance of him whom He loved; from this intention she would fain recall Him, by urging how death and corruption must have been busy in the tomb where Lazarus had already slept his four days' sleep. The Lord checks and rebukes her unbelief: “*Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*” When had He said this, and to what former conversation does He refer? No doubt to that which He held with her when first they met. It is true that these precise words do not occur there; but that conversation was on the power of faith, as the means to make our own the

\* It is singular how generally this ἥδη ὅζει has been taken in proof of that, whereof it is only a conjecture, and, I am persuaded, an erroneous one. Indeed the following τεταρταῖος γάρ ἔστι is decisive that Martha only guesses from the common order of things that corruption had begun. Yet Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xlix.*) : Resuscitavit putentem. Tertullian (*De Resur. Carn.* 53) speaks of the soul of Lazarus, quam nemo jam fætere senserat. Hilary (*De Trin.* vi. § 33) : Fætens Lazarus. Ambrose says of the bystanders (*De Fide Resurr.* ii. 80) : Fætorem sentiunt. Bernard (*In Assum. Serm. iv.*) : Fætere jam cœperat. Sedulius : Corruptum tabo exhalabat odorem. And a most offensive description in Prudentius (*Apotheosis*, 759-766), Chrysostom (*Hom. lii. in Joh.*), and Calvin : Alios Christus suscitavit, sed nunc in putrido cadavere potentiam suam exserit. In the *Letter of Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius* (Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus*, p. 807) this circumstance, as enhancing the wonder of the miracle, is urged with characteristic exaggerations : Νεκρόν τινα Λάζαρον τετράμερον ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστησε, διεφθαρμένον ἥδη ἔχοντα τὸ σῶμα ὑπὸ τῶν ἐλκογενήτων σκωλήκων, καὶ τὸ δυσῶδες ἐκεῖνο σῶμα τὰ κείμενον ἐν τῷ τάφῳ ἐκέλευσε τρέχειν· καὶ ὡς ἐκ παστοῦ νυμφός, οὐτος ἐκ τοῦ τάφου ἐξῆλθεν, εὐδίας πλεύστης πεπληρωμένος.

fulness of the powers that dwelt in Christ. There is no need, therefore, to suppose that He alludes to something in that prior discourse, unrecorded by the Evangelist. And now Martha acquiesces: she does believe, and no longer opposes the hindrance of her unbelief to the work which the Lord would accomplish.

"*Then,*" when those nearest of kin were thus consenting, "*they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me.*" But any thanksgiving upon his part to God, and thanksgiving on account of being heard, might easily have been misinterpreted by the disciples then, and by the Church afterwards; as though it would have been possible for the Father *not* to have heard Him,—as though He had first obtained this power to call Lazarus from his grave, after supplication,—had, like Elisha (2 Kin. iv. 33-35), by dint of prayer (cf. Acts ix. 40) painfully won back the life which had departed; whereas the power was most truly his own, not indeed in disconnection from the Father, for what He saw the Father do, that also He did; but in this, his oneness with the Father, there lay the uninterrupted power of doing these mighty acts.\* Therefore He explains, evidently not any more in that loud voice which should be heard by the whole surrounding multitude, but yet so that his disciples might hear Him, what this his "*Father, I thank Thee,*" meant, and why it was spoken: "*And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*" For them it was wholesome: they should thus understand that He claimed his power from above, and not from beneath; that there was no magic, no necromancy here. The thanks to God were an acknowledgment that the power was *from* God. Chrysostom supposes that when this thanksgiving prayer was uttered,

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\* Chrysostom (*Hom. lxiv. in Joh.*) enters at large upon this point. Maldonatus observes: *Nihil enim aliud his verbis quam essentiae voluntatisque unitatem significari.* Cf. Ambrose, *De Fide*, iii. 4.

Lazarus was already re-animated; but this assuredly is a mistake. Christ is so sure that the effect will follow his word, that He renders as by anticipation thanks to his Father; but this cry "*with a loud voice*,"\* calling the things that are not as though they were, this "*Lazarus, come forth*,"† is itself the quickening word, at which first the life returns to the dead.‡ For it is ever to *the voice* of the Son of God that the power of quickening the dead and calling them from their graves is attributed; thus John v. 28, 29: "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth;" so 1 Thess. iv. 16, it is the Lord's descending "*with a shout*," which is followed by the resurrection of the dead in Him. Nor, probably, is "*the last trump*" of 1 Cor. xv. 52, any thing else but this voice of God which shall sound through all the kingdom of death. Many, in their zeal for multiplying miracles, make it a new miracle, a wonder in a wonder,§ as St. Basil calls it, that Lazarus was able to obey the summons, while yet he was "*bound hand and foot with grave-clothes*."|| But if so, to what end the further word, "*Loose him, and let him go*?"¶

\* This κραυγάζειν is nowhere else attributed to the Lord: cf. Matt. xii. 19: οὐδὲ κραυγάσει.

† Cyril calls it θεοπρεπὲς καὶ βασιλικὸν κέλευσμα.

‡ Hilary (*De Trin.* vi. § 33): Nullo intervallo vocis et vitae.

§ Θάυμα ἐν θαύματι: cf. Ambrose, *De Fid. Res.* ii. 78; and so Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps.* ci. 21): Processit ille *vinctus*: non ergo pedibus propriis, sed virtute producentis.

|| Κειρίαι=τὰ σχοινία τὰ ἐντάφια=οὐθόνια (John xix. 40)=vincula linea (Tertullian).

¶ Of Lazarus himself we have but one further notice (John xii. 2), but that, like the command to give meat to the revived maiden (Mark v. 43), like the Lord's own participation of food after the resurrection (Luke xxiv. 42; John xxi. 13), a witness against any thing merely *phantastic* in his rising again. He is generally assumed to have been much younger than his sisters; one tradition mentioned by Epiphanius makes him thirty years old at this time, and to have survived for thirty years more. The traditions of his later life, as that he became bishop of Marseilles, rest upon no good authority: yet there is one circumstance of these traditions worthy of record, although not for its historic worth,—that the first question he asked the

Probably he was loosely involved in these grave-clothes, which hindering all free action, yet did not hinder motion altogether; or, it may be that, in accordance with the Egyptian fashion, every limb was wrapped round with these stripes by itself, just as in the mummies each separate finger has sometimes its own wrapping.

St. John here breaks off the narrative of the miracle itself, leaving us to imagine their joy, who thus beyond all expectation received back their dead from the grave; a joy which was well nigh theirs alone, among all the mourners of all times—

“Who to the verge have followed that they love,  
And on the insuperable threshold stand,  
With cherished names its speechless calm reprove,  
And stretch in the abyss their ungrasped hand.”

He leaves this, and passes on to show us the historic significance of this miracle in the development of the Lord's earthly history, the permitted link which it formed in the chain of those events, which should be crowned, according to the determinate decree and counsel of God, by the atoning death of the Son of God upon the cross.

What the purpose was of these Jews that “*went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done,*” has been diversely conceived. By some, as by Origen, it has been supposed that they went with a good intention, thinking to tell them that which even they could no longer resist, which would make them also acknowledge that this was the Christ. Yet the place which this intimation occupies in the narrative seems decisively to contradict this more favourable construction of their purpose. “*Many,*” St. John

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Lord after he was come back from the grave, was whether he should have to die again; and, learning that it must needs be so, that he never smiled any more. Lazarus, as a *revenant*, is often used by the religious romance-writers of the Middle Ages as a vehicle for their conceptions of the lower world. He is made to relate what he has seen and known, just as the Pamphylian that revived is used by Plato in the *Republic* for the same purposes (Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, pp. 167-169).

declares, “*of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him; but some of them,*” not of those that believed, but of the Jews, “*went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.*” These were persons who did *not* believe; who on one plea or another refused to be convinced by this miracle (Luke xvi. 31), and reported to the professed enemies of the Lord what He had done, to irritate them yet more against the doer,\* to warn them of the instant need of more earnestly counter-working Him who had done, or seemed to do, so great a sign; and it is observable that St. John joins immediately with this report to the Pharisees an increased activity in their hostile machinations against the Lord.

And they are indeed now seriously alarmed. They anticipate the effects which this, the mightiest work that Christ wrought, would have upon the people, which historically we know that it actually had (John xii. 10, 11, 17-19); and they gather in council together against the Lord and against his Anointed. They stop not to inquire whether “*this man,*” as they contemptuously call Him,—who, even according to their own confession, “*doeth many miracles*” (cf. Acts iv. 16), may not be doing them in the power of God, may not be indeed the promised King of Israel. The question of the truth or falsehood of his claims seems never to enter into their minds, but only how the acknowledgment of these claims will bear on the worldly fortunes of their order, and this they contemplate under somewhat a novel aspect: “*If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*” But what necessary connexion did they trace between the recognition of Jesus as the Christ, and a conflict with the Roman power? Probably this. The people will acknowledge Him for the Messiah; He will set Himself at their head, or they by compulsion will make Him their king (John vi. 15); hereupon

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\* Euthymius: Οὐχ ὡς θαυμάζοντες, ἀλλὰ διαβάλλοντες ὡς γόντα.

will follow an attempt to throw off the foreign yoke, an attempt to be crushed presently by the superior power of the Roman legions; and then these will not distinguish the innocent from the guilty, but will make a general sweep, taking away from us wholly whatsoever survives of our power and independence, "*our place\* and nation.*" Or, without anticipating an actual insurrection, they may have supposed that the mere fact of acknowledging a Messiah would arouse the jealousy of the Romans, would by them be accounted as an act of rebellion, to be visited with these extremest penalties.† How sensitive that jealousy was, how easily alarmed, we have a thousand proofs. The Roman governor comes at once to this point; "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" (John xviii. 33); and compare Acts xvi. 21; xvii. 7, 8. Augustine stands alone in a somewhat different interpretation of the words—namely, that the Jews were already meditating, as no doubt they were, the great revolt of a later time, and saw plainly that the very nerves of it would be cut by the spread of the doctrines of this Prince of peace. Where should they find instruments for their purpose? all resistance to the Roman domination would become impossible; and these whosoever they chose, would come and rob them of whatever remained of their national existence.‡ We shall do best, however, in

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\* Τὸν τόπον. Does this signify their city or their temple? A comparison with 2 Macc. v. 19 makes one certainly incline to the latter view; and cf. Acts vi. 13, 14; xxi. 28. The temple, round which all their hopes gathered, would naturally be uppermost in the minds of these members of the Sanhedrim; while to the city we nowhere find the same exaggerated importance ascribed. Yet many make τὸν τόπον = τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν, as Chrysostom, who in quoting the passage substitutes, apparently unconsciously, πόλιν for τόπον. So likewise Theophylact, Olshausen.

† Corn. a Lapide: Si omnes credant Jesum esse Messiam, regem Judæorum, irritabuntur contra nos Romani Judææ domini; quod nobis novum regem et Messiam, puta Jesum, ereaverimus, ac a Cæsare Tiberio ad eum defecerimus; quare armati venient et vastabunt et perdent Hierosolymam et Judæam, cum totâ Judæorum gente et re-publicâ.

‡ In *Ev. Joh. tract. xlix.*: Hoc autem timuerunt, ne si omnes in

adhering to the more usual interpretation. The question will still remain, Did they who said this, feel truly the dread which they professed; or only pretend to fear these consequences from the ministry of Christ, if suffered to remain uninterrupted; and that, on account of a party in the Sanhedrim (see John ix. 16), who could only by such pleas as these be won over to the extreme measures now meditated against Him? Chrysostom, and most of the Greek expositors, suppose they did but feign this fear; I must needs think that they were sincere in the alarm which they professed.

Probably many half-measures had been proposed by one member and another of the Sanhedrim for arresting the growing inclination of the people to recognize Jesus as the Christ, and had been debated backward and forward, such as hindering them from hearing Him; proclaiming anew, as had been done before, that any should be excommunicated who should confess Him to be Christ (John ix. 22). But these measures had been already tried, and had proved insufficient; and in that "*Ye know nothing at all*" of Caiaphas, we hear the voice of the bold bad man, silencing, with ill-suppressed contempt, his weak and vacillating colleagues, who could see the danger, while they yet shrunk, though not for the truth's sake, from the step which promised to remove it. "*Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*" Guilty or not guilty, this man, who threatens to imperil the whole nation, and, whether He Himself means it or no, to compromise it with the Roman power, must be taken out of the way.

Caiaphas, who dares thus to come to the point, and to speak the unuttered thought of many in that assembly, was a Sadducee (Acts v. 17), and held, as we know from other sources, the office of the high priesthood for ten successive

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Christum crederent, nemo remaneret, qui adversus Romanos civitatem Dei templumque defenderet.

years. This may not seem quite to agree with St. John's description of him here, as "*being the High Priest that same year;*" nor are these words otherwise without their difficulty, implying, as they seem to do, that St. John accounted the High Priesthood a yearly office.\* This, as we well know, was not the fact. The High Priesthood at this time was by the Romans as vilely prostituted as, under very similar circumstances, the Patriarch's throne at Constantinople is now by the Turks; it was shifted so rapidly from one to another, as sometimes to remain with one holder even for less than a year; but according to its institution was a lifelong office, and this very Caiaphas retained the dignity, if not for life, yet at all events much more than for a year. The language of St. John has sometimes been explained as though he would say that Caiaphas was High Priest for that ever-memorable year "when vision and prophecy should be sealed,"† and the Son of God die upon the cross. Yet why suppose him to mean more than that Caiaphas was High Priest *then?* whether he had been so before, or should be after, was nothing to his present purpose. He lays an emphasis on the fact that such he was at the moment when these words were uttered, because this gave them a weight and significance, which else they would not have possessed. They were not the words of Caiaphas; they were the words of the High Priest. "*This spake he not of himself; but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.*" The fact that he who uttered these words was, when he uttered them, clothed with the highest office in the theocracy gives them an oracular, even a prophetic character in the eyes of St. John.‡ This requires some explanation. That a bad man

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\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. xlix.*) notes the difficulty, though he has a singular accumulation of mistakes in his explanation. Among others, that Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, was *High Priest*; a mistake continually re-appearing in the Middle Ages. It grew out of an inaccurate understanding of Luke i. 9.

† Lightfoot, *Serm. on Judg. xx.* 27 (Pitman's edit. vol. vi. p. 280).

‡ Bengel: *Ubique occurrit Johannes interpretationi sinistra.*

should have uttered words which were so overruled by God as to become prophetic, would of itself be no difficulty. He who used a Balaam to declare how there should come a Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre out of Israel (Num. xxiv. 17), might have used Caiaphas to fore-announce other truths of his kingdom.\* Nor is there any difficulty in such *unconscious* prophecies as this evidently is.† How many prophecies of the like kind,—most of them, it is true, rather in act than in word, meet us in the whole history of the crucifixion! What was the title over our blessed Lord, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,” but another such a scornful and contemptuous, yet most veritable, prophecy? Or what again the purple robe and the homage, the sceptre and the crown? And in the typical rehearsals of the crowning catastrophe in the drama of God’s providence, how many a Nimrod and Pharaoh, antichrists that do not quite come to the birth, have prophetic parts allotted to them, which they play out, unknowing what they do; for such is the divine irony; so, in a very deep sense of the words,

Ludit in humanis divina potentia rebus.‡

But the perplexing circumstance is the attributing to Caia-

\* Augustine, adducing this prophecy, exclaims (*Serm. ccxv. 1*): *Magna vis est veritatis. Oderunt veritatem homines, et veritatem prophetant nescientes. Non agunt, sed agitur de illis.*

† It exactly answers as such to the *omina* of Roman superstition, in which words spoken by one person in a lower meaning are taken up by another in a higher, and by him claimed to be prophetic of that. Cicero (*De Divin.* i. 46) gives examples; these, too, resting on the faith that men’s words are ruled by a higher power than their own.

‡ We have an example of this in the very name Caiaphas, which is only another form of Cephas, being derived from the same Hebrew word. He was meant to be what Eusebius, with reference to the *peace-making* activity of Ireneus (*εἰρηναῖος*) in the Church, calls *him, φερώνυμος*: he should have been “the Rock;” here too, as in names like Stephen’s (*στέφανος*, the first winner of the martyr’s *crown*), the *nomen et omen* was to have held good. And such, had he been true to his position, had the Jewish economy past easily and without a struggle into that for which it was the preparation, he would naturally

phas, because he was *High Priest*, these prophetic words —for prophetic the Evangelist plainly pronounces them to be, and all attempts to rid his words of this intention, and to destroy the antithesis between “*speaking of himself*” and “*prophesying*” are idle.\* There is no need, however, to suppose (and this greatly diminishes the embarrassment) that he meant to affirm this to have been a power inherent in the High Priesthood; that the High Priest, as such, *must* prophesy; but only that God, the extorter of those unwilling, or even unconscious, prophecies from wicked men, ordained this further, that he in whom the whole theocracy culminated, who was “the Prince of the people” (Acts xxiii. 5), for such, till another High Priest had sanctified Himself; —and his moral character was nothing to the point,—Caiaphas truly was,—should, because he bore this office, be the organ of this memorable prophecy concerning Christ, and the meaning and end of his death.†

have been; the first in the one would have been first in the other. But as it was, he bore this name but in mockery; he was the rock indeed, but the rock on which, not the Church of Christ, but the synagogue of Satan, was built.—In the Syrian Church there are curious legends of the after life of Caiaphas, and his conversion to the faith (Thilo, *Cod. Apocryphus*, p. xxix.).

\* Wolf, *Curæ* (in loc.), gives some of these. It has likewise been proposed to put a stop after *προεφήτευσεν*, and to find here a device on the part of Caiaphas for silencing opposition, and causing his own opinion to carry the day: “This he spake, not as though he was giving his own opinion (*οὐκ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ*), but taking advantage of the old belief, that on great emergent occasions the High Priest would be endowed with oracular power, he professed now to be uttering words directly given him by the inspiration of God.” And then ὅτι ἔμελλεν κ. τ. λ. are words of the Evangelist: He did this, and succeeded in so getting the decree of death to be passed, *for Jesus was about to die for the people.*

+ Vitrina (*Obs. Sac.* vi. 11): Visus est Caiaphas Joanni fatidicum et ominosum quid proferre. Et vere sententia ejus hujusmodi est, ut altiore aliquem sensum condat. . . . Supponit igitur Apostolus non fuisse alienum a Pontifice Hebræorum illo tempore *προφητεύειν*, oracula fundere, et nescium etiam mandata Numinis profari. A Pontifice, inquam, hoc solum respectu Deo commendabili, quod Pontifex esset; cum cæteroquin personæ ejus nulla essent merita, quæ facere

What follows, “*And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad,*” is not a meaning legitimately involved in the words of Caiaphas, but is added by the care of St. John, to hinder that limitation of the benefits of Christ’s death, which otherwise might seem to lie in them. So grave a misinterpretation, now that the words had been adopted as more than man’s, it was well worth while to avert. Caiaphas indeed prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and (St. John himself adds) He indeed died not for it only, but also for the gathering in one of *all* the children of God scattered abroad through the whole world. Elsewhere he has declared the same truth: “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John ii. 2). Not the law, as the Jews supposed, but the atoning death of Christ was that which should bind together all men into one fellowship: “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” The law was rather a wall of separation. It was only that death, and the life which sprung out of that death, which could knit together. We may compare Ephes. ii. 13-22, as St. Paul’s commentary on these words of St. John. “*The children of God*” have this name by anticipation here; they are those predestinated to this; who, not being disobedient to the heavenly calling, should hereafter *become* his children by adoption and grace.\* Not otherwise, in a parallel passage, Christ says, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold” (John x. 16); others that should be hereafter his sheep. In a sub-

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poterant, ut Deus illius rationem haberet. Sed cum Deus Pontifices constituisset in illâ gente, publicos suæ legis voluntatisque interpres, etiamsi eos in universum propterea neutquam exemisset omni errore judicii in re religionis; placuit illi Caiaphæ Pontificis potius quam ullius alterius Assessoris linguam in dicendâ sententiâ ita moderari, ut, præter animi sui consilium, de necessitate et vero fine mortis Christi sapienter loqueretur, veramque ederet confessio-nem, ac si non tanquam Caiaphas sententiam pronunciasset. On the special illumination vouchsafed to the High Priest as bearer of the ephod, see Bähr, *Symbolik*, vol. ii. p. 136.

\* Augustine, *Ep. clxxxvii. 12.*

ordinate sense they might perhaps be termed “*children of God*” already; they were the nobler natures, although now run wild, among the heathen, the “sons of peace,” that should receive the message of peace (Luke x. 6); in a sense, “of the truth,” even while they were sharing much of the falsehood round them; so far “of the truth,” that, when the King of truth came and lifted up his banner in the world, they gladly ranged themselves under it (John xviii. 37; cf. Luke viii. 15; John iii. 19-21).

In pursuance of this advice of Caiaphas it came now to a solemn resolution on the part of the Sanhedrim, that Jesus should be put to death, and “*from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death.*” His death was resolved; the how to bring it about was all which they debated now. “*Jesus, therefore,*” whose hour was not yet come, “*walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples,*”—not indeed for long, for “*the Jews’ Passover was nigh at hand,*” and He, the very Paschal Lamb of that Passover, must not be wanting at the feast.

In the ancient Church there was ever found, besides the literal, an allegorical interpretation of this and the two other miracles of the like kind. As Christ raises those that are naturally dead, so also He quickens them that are spiritually dead; and the history of this miracle, as it abounds the most in details, so was it the most fruitful field on which the allegorists exercised their skill. Here they found the whole process of the sinner’s restoration from the death of sin to a perfect spiritual life shadowed forth; and these allegories are often rich in manifold adaptations of the history, as beautiful as they are ingenious, to that which it is made to declare.\* Nor was this all; for these three raisings from

\* See, for instance, Augustine, *Quast.* lxxxiii. qu. 65; Bernard, *De Assum. Serm.* iv.

the dead were often contemplated not apart, not as each portraying exactly the same truth ; but in their connexion with one another, as setting forth one and the same truth under different and successive aspects. It was observed how we have the record of three persons that were restored to life, — one, the daughter of Jairus, being raised *from the bed*; another the son of the widow, *from the bier*; and lastly, Lazarus, *from the grave*. Even thus, it was urged, Christ raises to newness of life sinners of all degrees; not only those who have just fallen away from truth and holiness, like the maiden who had just expired, and in whom, as with a taper newly extinguished, it was by comparison easy to kindle a vital flame anew; but He raises also them who, like the young man borne out to his burial, have been some little while dead in their trespasses. Nor has He even yet exhausted his power; for He quickens them also who, like Lazarus, have lain long festering in their sins, as in the corruption of the grave, who were not merely dead, but buried,—with the stone of evil customs and evil habits laid to the entrance of their tomb, and seeming to forbid all egress thence.\* Even this stone He rolls away, and bids them to come forth, loosing the bands of their sins;† so that presently they are

\* Gregory the Great (*Moral.* xxii. 15): *Veni foras; ut nimirum homo in peccato suo mortuus, et per molem malae consuetudinis jam sepultus, quia intra conscientiam suam absconsus jacet per nequitiam, a semetipso foras exeat per confessionem.* Mortuo enim, *Veni foras,* dicitur, ut ab excusatione atque occultatione peccati ad accusationem suam ore proprio exire provocetur (*2 Sam. xii. 13*). Thus too Hildebert, in his poem, *De Ss. Trinitate*, one of the noblest in the Christian hymnology—

Extra portam jam delatum,  
Jam fetentem, tumulatum,  
Vitta ligat, lapis urget;  
Sed si jubes, hic resurget.  
Jube, lapis revolvetur,  
Jube, vitta dirumpetur.  
Exiturus nescit moras,  
Postquam clamas; Exi foras.

† Sometimes Augustine makes the stone to be the law; thus *In*

sitting down with the Lord at that table, there where there is not the foul odour of the grave, but where the whole house is full of the sweet fragrance of the ointment of Christ (John xii. 1-3): All this Donne has well exprest: "If I be dead within doors (if I have sinned in my heart), why *suscitavit in domo*, Christ gave a resurrection to the ruler's daughter within doors, in the house. If I be dead in the gate (if I have sinned in the gates of my soul), in my eyes, or ears, or hands, in actual sins, why *suscitavit in portā*, Christ gave a resurrection to the young man at the gate of Nain. If I be dead in the grave (in customary and habitual sins), why *suscitavit in sepulcro*, Christ gave a resurrection to Lazarus in the grave too."\*

*Ev. Joh. tract. xlix.* : Quid est ergo, Lapidem removete? Littera occidens, quasi lapis est premens. Removete, inquit, lapidem. Removete legis pondus, gratiam prædicate. "Loose him, and let him go," he refers to release from Church censures; it was Christ's word which quickened the dead, who yet afterwards used the ministrations of men to restore entire freedom of action to him whom He had quickened (*Enarr. in Ps. ci. 21; Serm. xviii. 6*): Ille suscitavit mortuum, illi solverunt ligatum.

\* The other raisings from the dead nowhere afford subjects to early Christian Art; but this continually, and in all its stages. Sometimes it is Martha kneeling at the feet of Jesus; sometimes the Lord is touching with his wonder-staff the head of Lazarus, who is placed upright (which is a mistake, and a transfer of Egyptian customs to Judæa), and rolled up as a mummy (which was nearly correct), in a niche of the grotto; sometimes he is coming forth from thence at the word of the Lord (Münster, *Sinnbilder d. Alt. Christ.* vol. ii. p. 98).—From a sermon of Asterius we learn that it was a custom in his time, and Chrysostom tells us it was the same among the wealthy Byzantines, to have this and other miracles of our Lord woven on their garments. "Here mayest thou see," says Asterius, "the marriage in Galilee and the waterpots, the impotent man that carried his bed on his shoulders, the blind man that was healed with clay, the woman that had an issue of blood and touched the hem of his garment, the awakened Lazarus; and with this they count themselves pious, and to wear garments well-pleasing to God."

### 30. THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF TWO BLIND MEN NEAR JERICHO.

MATT. XX. 29-34; MARK X. 46-52; LUKE XVIII. 35-43.

THE adjusting of the several records of this miracle has put the ingenuity of Scripture harmonists to the stretch. St. Matthew commences his report of it as follows : “*And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold, two blind men, sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.*” Thus, according to him, the Lord is departing from Jericho, and the petitioners are two. St. Luke appears at first sight to contradict both these facts, for he makes the cure to have taken place at his *coming nigh* to the city, and the healed to have been but one ; while St. Mark occupies a middle place, holding in part by one of his fellow Evangelists, in part by the other. He, with St. Luke, names but one whose eyes were opened ; but consents with St. Matthey in placing the miracle, not at the entering into, but the going out from, Jericho ; so that the three narratives curiously cross and interlace one another. To escape all difficulties of this kind there is of course the ready expedient always at hand, that the sacred historians are recording different events, and that therefore there is nothing to reconcile. But in fact we do not thus evade, we only exchange, our embarrassment. Accepting this solution, we must believe that twice, or rather thrice, in the immediate neighbourhood of Jericho, our Lord was besought in almost the same words by blind beggars on the wayside for mercy ; — that on all three occasions there was a multitude accompanying Him, who sought to silence the vociferations of the claimants, but only caused them to cry the more ; — that in each case Jesus stood still and demanded what they wanted ; — that in each

case they made the same reply in very nearly the same words; —and a great deal more.\* All this is so unnatural, so improbable, so unlike any thing in actual life, so unlike the infinite variety which the Gospel incidents present, that for myself I should prefer almost any explanation to this.

The three apparently discordant accounts of this miracle, no one of them entirely agreeing with any other, can at once be reduced to two by that rule, which in all reconciliations of parallel histories must be applied, namely, that the silence of one narrator is in itself no contradiction of the statement of another; thus St. Mark† and St. Luke, making mention of *one* blind man, do not contradict St. Matthew, who mentions *two*. There remains only the difficulty that by one Evangelist the healing is placed at the Lord's entering into the city, by the others at his going out. This is no sufficient ground to justify a duplication of the fact; and Bengel, as I must needs believe, with his usual happy tact, has selected the right reconciliation of the difficulty;‡ namely, that one cried to Him as He drew near to the city,§ whom yet He

\* Some in old times and new have seen themselves bound in to such a conclusion:—thus Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 65), who expresses himself strongly on the matter; Lightfoot (*Harmony of the N. T.* sect. 69); and Greswell. On the other hand, Theophylact, Chrysostom, Maldonatus, Grotius, have with more or less confidence maintained that we have here but one and the same event.

† Augustine (*De Cons. Evang.* ii. 65): *Procul dubio itaque Bartimaeus iste Timaei filius ex aliquâ magnâ felicitate dejectus, notissimæ et famosissimæ miseriæ fuit, quod non solum cæcus, verum etiam mendicus sedebat. Hinc est ergo quod ipsum solum voluit commemorare Marcus, cuius illuminatio tam claram famam huic miraculo comparavit, quam erat illius nota calamitas.* Cf. *Quest. Evang.* ii. 48.

‡ Bengel: *Marcus unum commemorat Bartimaeum, insigniorem (x. 46), eudemque Lucas (xviii. 35) innuit, qui transponendæ historiæ occasionem exinde habuit, quod cæcorum alter, Jesu Hierichuntrem intrante, in viâ notitiam divini hujus medici acquisivit. Salvator dum apud Zacchæum pranderet, vel pernoctaret potius, Bartimæo cæcorum alter, quem Matthæus adjungit, interim associatus est.* I observe Maldonatus had already fallen upon the same reconciliation.

§ Grotius will have it that St. Luke's *ἐν τῷ ἡγγίζειν* here does not necessarily mean, and does not here mean, When He was *drawing near to*, but, When He was *in the neighbourhood of*,—and that this

cured not then, but on the morrow at his going out of the city cured him together with the other, to whom in the mean while he had joined himself. St. Matthew will then relate by prolepsis, as is not uncommon with all historians, the whole of the event where he first introduces it, rather than, by cutting it in two halves, and deferring the conclusion, preserve a more painful accuracy, yet lose the effect which the complete narrative related at a breath would possess.

In the cry with which these blind men sought to attract the pity of Christ there lay on their part a recognition of his dignity as the Messiah; for this name, "*Son of David,*" was the popular designation of the great expected Prophet. There was therefore upon their part a double confession of faith; a confession, first that He could heal them, and secondly, not merely as a prophet from God, but as *the* Prophet, as the one at whose coming the eyes of the blind should be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped (*Isai. xxxv. 5; xxix. 18*). In the case of the man blind from his birth (*John ix.*) we have the same confessions, but following, and not preceding, the cure, and with intervals between; so that first he acknowledges Him as a prophet (*ver. 17*), and only later as the Christ (*ver. 38*). Here the explanation has been sometimes found of what follows: "*The multitude rebuked them, because they would not hold their peace.*" It grudged to hear given to Jesus titles of honour, which it was not itself prepared to accord Him.\* We should then have here a parallel to *Luke xix. 39*; only that there the Pharisees would have

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nearness to the city might be, and in this case was, that of one who had just departed *from*, not of one who was now approaching *to*, it. But, to set aside whether the words *can* mean this, the narrative, which follows, of the conversion of Zaccheus (introduced with a *kai εἰσελθών*), is wholly against the supposition that St. Luke means to signify by those words that the Lord was now *leaving* Jericho.

\* Hilary (*Comm. in Matt. in loc.*): *Denique eos turba objurgat, quia acerbe a cæcis audiunt quod negabant, Dominum esse David Filium.*

Christ Himself to rebuke those that were glorifying Him, while here the multitude take the rebuking into their own hands. Yet this explanation will hardly stand. It was quite in the spirit of the envious malignant Phárisées to be vexed with those Messianic salutations: “Blessed be the King, that cometh in the name of the Lord;” but these well-meaning multitudes, rude and for the most part spiritually undeveloped as no doubt they were, were exempt from such spiritual malignities. We meet rather among them a sympathy in the main with the Lord and with his work. While others said that his miracles were wrought in the power of Beelzebub, they glorified God because of them. And here, too, I cannot doubt but that out of an intention of honouring Christ they sought to silence these suppliants. He may have been teaching as He went, and they would not have Him interrupted by ill-timed and unmannerly clamours.

But the voices of these suppliants are not to be stifled so. On the contrary, “*they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.*” Many admirable homiletic applications of this portion of the history have been made. Is there not here, it has been often asked, the story of innumerable souls? When any is first in earnest about his salvation, and begins to cry that his eyes may be opened, that he may walk in *his* light who has the light of life, begins to despise the world and the objects which other men desire, he will find infinite hindrances, and these not from professed enemies of the Gospel of Christ, but from such as seem, like this multitude, to be with Jesus and on his side. Even they will endeavour to stop his mouth, and to hinder any earnest crying to the Lord.\* And then, with a picture from the life,

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\* Augustine (*Serm. ccxlix. 5*): Reprehensuri sunt nos . . quasi dilectores nostri, homines sœculares, amantes terram, sapientes pulverem, nihil de cœlo ducentes, auras liberas corde, nare carpentes: reprehensuri sunt nos procul dubio, atque dicturi, si viderint nos ista humana, ista terrena contemnere: Quid pateris? quid insanis? Turba illa est contradicens, ne cœcus clamet. Et aliquanti Chris-

Augustine makes further application in the same line, of what follows, when Jesus, arrested as ever by the cry of need, “*stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, arise; He calleth thee.*” This too, he observes, repeats itself continually in the life of God’s saints. If a man will only despise these obstacles from a world which calls itself Christian, and overcome them; if, despite of all opposers, he will go on, until Christ is evidently and plainly with him, then the very same who at the first reprehended, will in the end applaud; they who at first exclaimed, “He is mad,” will end with exclaiming, “He is a saint.”\*

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tiani sunt, qui prohibent vivere Christiane, quia et illa turba cum Christo ambulabat, et vociferantem hominem ad Christum ac lucem desiderantem, ab ipsius Christi beneficio prohibebat. Sunt tales Christiani, sed vineamus illos, vivamus bene, et ipsa vita sit vox nostra ad Christum. And again, *Serm. lxxxviii. 13, 14:* Incipiat mundum contemnere, inopi sua distribuere, pro nihilo habere quæ homines amant, contemnatur injurias, . . . si quis ei abstulerit sua, non repetat; si quid alieni abstulerit, reddat quadruplum. Cum ista facere cœperit, omnes sui cognati, affines, amici commoventur. Quid insanis? Nimius es: numquid alii non sunt Christiani? Ista stultitia est, ista dementia est. Et cætera talia turba clamat, ne cæci clamant. . . Bonos Christianos, vere studiosos, volentes facere præcepta Dei, Christiani mali et tepidi prohibent. Turba ipsa quæ cum Domino est prohibet clamantes, id est, prohibet bene operantes, ne perseverando sanentur. Gregory the Great gives it another turn, saying (*Hom. ii. in Evang.*): Sæpe namque dum converti ad Dominum post perpetrata vitia volumus, dum contra hæc eadem exorare vitia quæ perpetrativimus, conamur, occurrunt cordi phantasmata peccatorum quæ fecimus, mentis nostræ aciem reverberant, confundunt animum, et vocem nostræ deprecationis premunt. Quæ præbiant ergo; increpabant eum, ut taceret. . . In se, ut suspicor, recognoscit unusquisque quod dicimus: quia dum ab hoc mundo animum ad Deum mutamus, dum ad orationis opus convertimur, ipsa quæ prius delebiliter gessimus, importuna postea atque gravia in oratione nostri toleramus. Vix eorum cogitatio manu sancti desiderii ab oculis cordis abigitur; vix eorum phantasmata per pœnitentiæ lumenta superantur.

\* Augustine (*Serm. lxxxviii. 17*): Cum quisque Christianus cœperit bene vivere, fervere bonis operibus, mundumque contemnere, in ipsa novitate operum suorum patitur reprehensores et contradictores frigidos Christianos. Si autem perseveraverit, et eos superaverit perdurando, et non defeccerit a bonis operibus; iidem ipsi jam obse-

“*And he, casting away his garment,*” to the end that he might obey with the greater expedition,\* and without incumbrance, “*rose and came to Jesus.*” In this his ridding himself of all which would have been in his way, he has been used often as an example for every soul which Jesus has called, that it should in like manner lay aside every weight and every besetting sin (Matt. xiii. 44, 46; Phil. iii. 7). The Lord’s question, “*What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?*” is, in part, an expression of his readiness to aid, a comment in act upon his own words, spoken but a little while before, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matt. xx. 28); is in part intended to evoke into livelier exercise the faith and expectation of the petitioner (Matt. ix. 28). The man, whose cry has been hitherto a vague indeterminate cry for mercy, now singles out the blessing which he craves, designates the channel in which he desires that this mercy may flow,† and makes answer, “*Lord, that I might receive my sight.*” Only St. Matthew mentions the *touching* of the eyes which were to be restored to vision (cf. ix. 29), and only St. Luke the word of power, the “*Re-*

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quentur, qui ante prohibebant. Tamdiu enim corripiunt et perturbant et vetant, quamdiu sibi cedi posse præsumunt. Si autem victi fuerint perseverantia proficientium, convertunt se et dicere incipiunt, Magnus homo, sanctus homo, felix cui Deus concessit. Honorant, gratulantur, benedicunt, laudant; quomodo illa turba quæ cum Domino erant. Ipsa prohibebat ne caeci clamarent; sed postquam illi ita clamaverunt, ut mererentur audiri, et impetrare misericordiam Domini, ipsa turba rursum dicit, Vocat vos Jesus. Jam et hortatores fiunt, qui paulo ante corripiebant ut tacerent. How exactly this was the story of St. Francis of Assisi.

\* Thus *Il. ii. 185* :· Βῆ δὲ θέειν, ἀπὸ δὲ χλαῖναν βάλε: and in *Phædrus*, v. fab. 2: Stringitque gladium, dein rejectā penulī; cf. Suetonius, *August.* 26.

† Gregory the Great (*Hom. ii. in Evang.*), commenting on this request of theirs, bids us, in like manner, to *concentrate* our petitions on the chief thing of all: Non falsas divitias, non terrena dona, non fugitivos honores a Domino, sed *lucem* quæramus: nec lucem quæ loco clauditur, quæ tempore finitur, quæ noctium interruptione variaatur, quæ a nobis communiter cum pecoribus cernitur: sed lucem quæramus, quam videre cum solis Angelis possimus, quam nec initium inchoat, nec finis angustat.

*ceive thy sight,"* by which the cure was effected; while he and St. Mark record nearly similar words, passed over by St. Matthew: "*Thy faith hath made thee whole*"—" *Thy faith hath saved thee.*" The man, who had hitherto been tied to one place, now used aright his restored eyesight; for he used it to follow Jesus in the way, and this with the free outbreaks of a thankful heart, himself "*glorifying God,*" and being the occasion also that "*all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God*" as well (Acts iii. 8-10).

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### 31. THE CURSING OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

MATT. xxi. 17-22; MARK xi. 12-14, 20-24.

THIS miracle was wrought upon the Monday of the week of Passion. On the Sunday of Palms our blessed Lord had made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and in the evening,—since even now his hour, though close at hand, was not altogether come,—He retired from the snares and perils of the city to the safer Bethany, to the house, probably, of those sisters whom He had so lately made rich with a restored brother, and there passed the night. On the Monday morning, as He was returning from Bethany to his ministry in the city very early, indeed before sunrise, the word against the fig-tree was spoken. That same evening He with his disciples went back to Bethany to lodge there, but probably at so late an hour that the darkness prevented these from marking the effects which had followed upon that word. It was not till the morning of Tuesday that "*they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.*" Such is the exact order of the circumstances, in the telling of which St. Mark shows himself a more accurate observer of times than the first Evangelist;—not, indeed, that this gives him any superiority: our advantage is that we have both records:—St. Matthew's, who was concerned for the inner idea, and hastened on to that, omitting circumstances which came between, that he might present the whole event as one, at a single glance, in a single picture, without the historical perspective,—of which he at no time takes any especial note, his gifts and his aim being different;—and also St. Mark's, who was concerned likewise for the picturesque setting forth of the truth in its external details, as it was linked with times and with places, as it gradually unfolded itself before the eyes of men.

But while such differences as these are easily set at one,

and they who magnify them into difficulties are the true Pharisees of history, straining at gnats and swallowing camels, there are other and undoubted difficulties in this narrative, such as we are bound to meet, and not to attempt to evade. Take the facts as recorded by St. Matthew: "*Now in the morning, as He returned into the city, He hungered. And when He saw a fig-tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said to it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.*" We first ask ourselves here, how should our Lord, knowing, as by his divine power He must, that there were no figs upon that tree, have yet gone to seek them there, made to his disciples as though He had expected to find them? Was this consistent with the perfectness of sincerity and truth? Slight as would have been the deceit, yet, if it was such, it would trouble the clearness of our image of Him, whom we conceive as the absolute Lord of truth. It is again perplexing, that He should have treated the tree as a moral agent, punishing it as though unfruitfulness had been any guilt upon its part. This, in itself perplexing, becomes infinitely more so through a notice of St. Mark's; which indeed the order of the natural year would, without this notice, have suggested, that "*the time of figs was not yet*;" so that at the time when they could not seasonably be expected, He sought, and was displeased at failing to find, them. For, whatever the undermeaning might have been in treating the tree as a moral agent, and granting such treatment to have been entirely justified, yet all seems again lost and obscured, if it thus lay not in the power of the tree to be otherwise than it was, namely, without fruit. For the symbol must needs be carried through; if by a figure we attribute guilt to the tree for not having fruit, we must be consistent, and show that it might have had such, and that there was no just and sufficient reason why then it should have had none.

Upon the first point, that the Lord approached the tree, appearing to expect fruit upon it, and yet knowing that He..

should find none, deceiving thereby those who were with Him, who no doubt believed that what He professed to look for, He expected to find, it is sufficient to observe that a similar charge might be made against all figurative teaching, whether by word or by deed : for in all such there is a worshipping of truth in the spirit and not in the letter ; often a forsaking of it in the letter, for the better honouring and establishing of it in the spirit. A parable is told *as true*, and though the facts are feigned, yet *is* true, because of the deeper truth which sustains the outward fabric of the story ; it is true, because it is the shrine of truth, and because the truth which it enshrines looks through and through it. Even so a symbolic action is done *as real*, as meaning something ; and yet, although not meaning the thing which it professes to mean, is no deception, since it means something infinitely higher and deeper, of which the lower action is a type, and in which that lower is lost and swallowed up ; transfigured and transformed by the higher, whereof it is made the vehicle. What was it, for instance, here, if Christ did not mean really to look for fruit on that tree, being aware that it had none ? yet He did mean to show how it would fare with a man or with a nation, when God came looking from it for the fruits of righteousness, and found nothing but the abundant leaves of a boastful yet empty profession.\*

\* Augustine (*Quæst. Evang.* ii. 51) : Non enim omne quod fingimus mendacium est : sed quando id fingimus, quod nihil significat, tunc est mendacium. Cum autem fictio nostra refertur ad aliquam significationem, non est mendacium, sed aliqua figura veritatis. Alioquin omnia quæ a sapientibus et sanctis viris, vel etiam ab ipso Domino figurate dicta sunt, mendacia deputabuntur, quia secundum usitatum intellectum non subsistit veritas talibus dictis. . . . Sicut autem dicta, ita etiam facta finguntur sine mendacio ad aliquam rem significandam ; unde est etiam illud Domini quod in fici arbore quæsivit fructum eo tempore, quo illa poma nondum essent. Non enim dubium est illam inquisitionem non fuisse veram ; quivis enim hominum sciret, si non divinitate, vel tempore, poma illam arborem non habere. Fictio igitur quæ ad aliquam veritatem refertur, figura est ; quæ non refertur, mendacium est. Cf. *Serm. lxxxix. 4-6* : Quærit intelligentem, non facit errantem.

As regards the second objection, that He should have put forth his anger on a tree, the real objection lying at the root of this in many minds oftentimes is, that He should have put forth his anger at all; that God should ever show Himself as a punishing God; that there should be any such thing as "*the wrath of the Lamb*," as the having to give account of advantages, as a day of doom. But seeing that such things are, how needful that men should not forget it: yet they might have forgot it, as far as the teaching of the miracles went, but for this one—all the others being miracles of help and of healing. And even the severity of this, with what mercy was it tempered! Christ did not, like Moses and Elijah, make the assertion of God's holiness and his hatred of evil at the cost of many lives, but only at the cost of a single unfeeling tree. His miracles of mercy were unnumbered, and on men; his miracle of judgment was but one, and on a tree.\*

But then, say some, it was unjust to deal thus with a tree at all, which, being incapable of good or of evil, was as little a fit object of blame as of praise, of punishment as reward. But this very objection does, in truth, imply that it was *not* unjust, that the tree was a *thing*, which might therefore lawfully be used merely as a means for ends lying beyond itself. Man is the prince of creation, and all things else are to serve him, and then rightly fulfil their subordinate uses when they

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\* Hilary (*Comm. in Matt.* in loc.): In eo quidem bonitatis Dominiæ argumentum repetemus. Nam ubi offerre voluit procuratæ a se salutis exemplum, virtutis suæ potestatem in humanis corporibus exercuit: spei futurorum et animæ salutem curis præsentium ægritudinum commendans: . . . nunc vero, ubi in contumaces formam severitatis constituebat, futuri speciem damno arboris indicavit, ut infidelitatis periculum, sine detimento eorum in quorum redemptionem venerat, diceretur. Thus, too, Grotius: Clementissimus Dominus, quum innumeris miraculis sua in nos æterna beneficia figurasset, severitatem judicii, quod infrugiferos homines manet, uno duntaxat signo, idque non in homine, sed in non sensurâ arbore, adumbravit; ut certi essemus bonorum operum sterilitatem gratias fœcundantis ademptione puniri. Theophylact brings out in the same way the φιλανθρωπία of this miracle: ξηράνει οὖν τὸ δένδρον, ἵνα σωφρονίσῃ ἀνθρώπους.

do serve him,—in their life or in their death,—yielding unto him fruit, or warning him in a figure what shall be the curse and penalty of unfruitfulness. Christ did not attribute moral responsibilities to the tree, when He smote it because of its unfruitfulness, but He did attribute to it a fitness for representing moral qualities.\* All our language concerning trees, a *good* tree, a *bad* tree, a tree which *ought* to bear, is the same continual transfer to them of moral qualities, and a witness for the natural fitness of the Lord's language,—the language indeed of an act, rather than of words. By his word, however (Luke xiii. 6-9),† He had already in some sort prepared his disciples for understanding and interpreting his act;

\* Witsius (*Meletem. Leiden.* p. 414) expresses this excellently well: At quid tandem commisit infelix arbor, ob quam rem tam inopinato muletaretur exitio? Si verborum proprietatem sectemur, omnino nihil. Creaturæ enim rationis expertes, uti virtutis ac vitii, ita et præmii ac pœnæ, proprie et striete loquentes, incapaces sunt. Potest tamen in creaturis istis aliquid existere, quod, analogicâ et symbolicâ quâdam ratione, et vitio et pœnæ respondeat. Defectus fructuum in arbore cæteroquin generosâ, succulentâ, bene plantatâ, frondosâ, multa pollicente, symbolice respondet vitio animi degenerantis, luxuriosi, ingratî, simulati, superbi, verâ tamen virtute destituti; subitanea arboris ex imprecatione Christi aresfactio, quâ tollitur quidquid in arbore videbatur esse boni, analogiam quandam habet cum justissimâ Christi vindictâ, quâ in eos animadvertisit, qui benignitate suâ abutuntur. Quemadmodum igitur peccata ista hominum vere merentur pœnam, ita κατ' ἀνάλογια dici potest, arborem, ita uti descripsimus comparatam, mereri exitium.

† It is very noticeable that the only times that the fig-tree appears prominently in the N. T., it appears as the symbol of evil; here and at Luke xiii. 6. Isidore of Pelusium (in Cramer, *Catena*, in loc.) refers to the old tradition, that it was the tree of temptation in Paradise. For traditions of impurity connected with it, see Tertullian, *De Pudicit.* 6. Buffon calls it arbre indécent; for explanation of which see a learned note in Sepp, *Leben Jesu*, vol. iii. p. 225, seq. Bernard (*In Cant. Serm. ix.* 3): Maledicit ficalneæ pro eo quod non invenit in eâ fructum. Bene ficus, quæ bonâ licet Patriarcharum radice prodierit, numquam tamen in altum proficere, numquam se humo attollere voluit, numquam respondere radici proceritate ramorum, generositate florum, fecunditate fructuum. Male prorsus tibi cum tuâ radice convenit, arbor pusilla, tortuosa, nodosa. Radix enim sancta. Quid eâ dignum tuis appetet in ramis? The Greek proverbial expressions, σύκινος ἀνήρ, a poor strengthless man, συκίνη ἐπικουρία, unhelpful help, supply further parallels.

and the not unfrequent use of this very symbol in the O. T.; as at Hos. ix. 10; Joel i. 7, must have likewise assisted them here.

But, conceding all this, it may still be objected, Do not those words of St. Mark, "*for the time of figs was not yet,*" acquit the tree even of this figurative guilt? Does not the fact thus mentioned defeat the symbol, and put it, so to speak, in contradistinction with itself? does it not perplex us in Him, of whom we claim above all things that highest reason should guide his every action, that He should have looked for figs, when they could not have been found;—that He should have been as though indignant, when He did not find them? The simplest, and as it appears to me, the entirely satisfying, explanation of this difficulty is the following. At that early period of the year, March or April, neither leaves nor fruit were naturally to be looked for on a fig-tree (the passages often quoted to the contrary not making out, as I think, their point\*), nor in ordinary circumstances would

\* Moreover all explanations which go to prove that, according to the natural order of things, there might have been in Palestine, even at this early time of the year, figs on that tree, either winter figs which had survived till spring, or the early figs of spring themselves,—all these, ingenious as they often are, yet seem to me beside the point. For, whether they prove this point or not, they shatter upon that *οὐ γὰρ ἦν καὶρὸς σύκων* of St. Mark; from which it is plain that no such calculation of probabilities brought the Lord thither, but those abnormal leaves, which He had a right to count would have been accompanied with abnormal fruit. In four or five ingenious ways it has been sought to make these words *not* to mean that which they bear upon their front that they do mean, and so to disencumber the passage of difficulties with which it seems laden. The worst is that which places a note of interrogation after *σύκων*, and makes the sacred historian to burst out in an exclamation of wonder at the barrenness of the fig-tree,—“*For was it not the time of figs?*” But this sort of passionate narration—supplying the reader with his feelings ready-made, his wonder, his abhorrence, his admiration—is that the uniform *absence* of which is one of the very most striking features of the Gospel story. Scarcely better, though certainly more ingenious, is Daniel Heinsius’ suggestion, which has found favour with Knatchbull, Gataker, and others. His help is in a different pointing and accenting of the passage, as thus, *οὐ γὰρ ἦν, καὶρὸς*.

any one have sought them there. But that tree, by putting forth leaves, made pretension to be something more than others, to have fruit upon it, seeing that in the fig-tree the

*σύκων*, “*For where He was, it was the season of figs*,”—in the mild climate of Judæa, where, as we know, the fruits of the earth ripened nearly a month earlier than in Galilee. But MSS. and ancient Versions give not the least support; and to express *ibi loci* by *οὐ γὰρ ἦν* is as awkward and forced as well can be. Deyling (*Obss. Sac.* vol. iii. p. 277) is better. He makes *οὐ = οὐπώ*, and *καιρός = tempus colligendi fructūs*, the time for the gathering the figs. The harvest had not yet swept away the crop; therefore the Lord could reasonably have looked for fruit upon the tree; and the words will be an explanation, not of the words “*He found nothing but leaves*,” immediately going before, but of his earlier-mentioned going to the tree, expecting to find fruit thereon. This explanation has Kuinoel, Wetstein, and others upon its side. The remoteness of the words to which this clause will refer is not a fatal objection, for similar instances might be adduced from St. Mark, as xvi. 3, 4, and xii. 12, where the words, “for they knew that He had spoken against them,” are an explanation of the fact that they sought to lay hold on Him, not of their fearing the people. But *καιρός τῶν καρπῶν* (Matt. xxi. 34; cf. Luke xx. 10), on which the upholders of this scheme greatly rely, means the time of the *ripe* fruits, not the time of the *ingathered*. That, however, which has found more favour than any of these, and which Hammond, D’Outrein, and many more have embraced, would make *καιρός = καιρὸς εὑφορος*, and would understand St. Mark to be saying, It was an unfavourable season for figs. A very old, although almost unnoticed, reading, *οὐ γὰρ καιρός οὐκ ἦν σύκων*, would be still more favourable to this explanation. But we want some example of *καιρός* alone being used as = *καιρὸς εὑφορος*, for Matt. xiii. 30, Luke xx. 10, which are sometimes adduced, do not satisfy. Conscious of this, Olshausen and a writer in the *Theol. Stud. und Krit.* 1843, p. 181, seq., have slightly modified this view. These do not make *καιρός* exactly “season,” since the season for the chief crop, whether good or bad, had not yet arrived, and therefore there would be no room for expressing a judgment about it; but they take it in the sense of weather, temperature; *καιρός = tempus opportunum*. If there had been favourable weather, at once moist and warm, there would have been figs on the tree; not indeed the general crop, but the *ficus præcox* (see Pliny, *H. N.* xv. 19), the early spring fig, which was counted an especial delicacy (“the figs that are first ripe,” Jer. xxiv. 2), and of which Isaiah speaks (xxviii. 4) as “the *hasty fruit before the summer*, which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up” (cf. Hos. ix. 10); or if not these, the late winter fig, which Shaw mentions (*Realwörterbuch*, s. v. *Feigenbaum*) as first ripening after the tree has lost its leaves, and hanging on the tree, in a mild season, into the spring. For this use of *καιρός*

fruit appears before the leaves.\* It, so to speak, vaunted itself to be in advance of all the other trees, challenged the passer-by that he should come and refresh himself from it. Yet when the Lord accepted its challenge, and drew near, it proved to be but *as* the others, without fruit as they; for indeed, as the Evangelist observes, the time of figs had not yet arrived,—its fault, if one may use the word, lying in its pretension, in its making a show to run before the rest, when it did not so indeed. It was condemned, not so much for having no fruit, as that, not having fruit, it clothed itself abundantly with leaves, with the foliage which, according to the natural order of the tree's development, gave pledge and promise that fruit should be found on it, if sought.

And this will then exactly answer to the sin of Israel, which under this tree was symbolized,—that sin being, not so much that they were without fruit, as that they boasted of so much. Their true fruit, as of any people before the Incarnation, would have been to own that they had no fruit, that without Christ, without the incarnate Son of God, they could do nothing; to have presented themselves before God bare and naked and empty altogether. But this was exactly what

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as favourable weather a passage much to the point has been cited from the *Hecuba* of Euripides—

Ούκουν δεινὸν, εἰ γῆ μὲν κακὴ,  
Τυχοῦσα καιροῦ θεόθεν, εὐ στάχνη φέρει,  
Χρηστὴ δ', ἀμαρτοῦσ' ὅν χρεων αὐτὴν τυχεῖν,  
Κακὸν δίδωσι καρπόν.

Upon this Matthiae says: Quum καιρός omnia complectatur, quae alieni rei opportuna et consentanea sunt, hoc loco proprie significat omnia ea, quae agris, ut fructus ferant, accommodata sunt, ut pluviam, eōli commodam temperiem, quo sensu accepisse Euripidem ex adjecto θεόθεν patet. Yet allowing all this, there is a long step between it and proving καιρὸς σύκων to be = tempus opportunum ficiis. The great advantage of the exposition given in the text is, that it requires no violence to be done to the words, but takes them in that sense in which every one, but for difficulties which seem to follow, would take them. See Sir T. Browne, *Obss. upon Plants mentioned in Scripture, — Works*, vol. iv. pp. 162-167.

\* Pliny (*H. N.* xvi. 49): Ei demum serius folium nascitur quam pomum.

Israel refused to do. Other nations might have nothing to boast of, but they by their own showing had much.\* And yet on closer inspection, the substance of righteousness was as much wanting on their part as anywhere among the nations (Rom. ii.).

And how should it have been otherwise? “*for the time of figs was not yet;*”—the time for the bare stock and stem of humanity to array itself in bud and blossom, with leaf and fruit, had not come, till its engrafting on the nobler stock of the true Man. All which anticipated this, which seemed to say that it could *be* anything, or *do* anything, otherwise than in Him and by Him, was deceptive and premature. The other trees had nothing, but they did not pretend to have anything; this tree had nothing, but it gave out that it had much. So was it severally with Gentile and with Jew. The Gentiles were empty of all fruits of righteousness, but they owned it; the Jews were empty, but they vaunted that they were full. The Gentiles were sinners, but they hypocrites and pretenders to boot, and by so much farther from the kingdom of God, and more nigh unto a curse.† Their guilt was not that they had not the perfect fruits of faith, for the time of such was not yet; but that, not having, they so boastfully gave out that they had: their condemnation was, not that they were not healed, but that, being unhealed, they counted themselves whole. The law would have done its work, the very work for which God ordained it, if it had stripped them of these boastful leaves, or rather had hindered them from ever putting them forth.

Here then, according to this explanation, there is no diffi-

\* It is not a little remarkable that it was with the fig-leaves that in Paradise Adam attempted to deny his nakedness, and to present himself as other than a sinner before God (Gen. iii. 7).

† Witsius (*Meletem. Leiden.* p. 415): *Folia sunt jactatio legis, templi, cultus, cærimoniarum, pietatis denique et sanctimoniæ, quarum se specie valde efferebant. Fructus sunt resipiscentia, fides, sanctitas, quibus carebant.*

culty either in the Lord's going to the tree at that unseasonable time,—He would not have gone, but for those deceitful leaves which announced that fruit was there,—nor in the (symbolic) punishment of the unfruitful tree at a season of the year when, according to the natural order, it could not have had any. It was punished not for being without fruit, but for proclaiming by the voice of those leaves that it had such; not for being barren, but for being false. And this was the guilt of Israel, a guilt so much deeper than the guilt of the nations. The attentive study of the Epistle to the Romans supplies the key to the right understanding of this miracle; such passages especially as ii. 3, 17-27; x. 3, 4, 21; xi. 7, 10. Nor should that remarkable parallel, "And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree to flourish" (Ezek. xvii. 24), be left out of account.\* And then the sentence, "*No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever,*" will be just the reversal of the promise that in them all nations of the earth should be blessed—the symbolic counterstroke to the ratification of the Levitical priesthood through the putting forth, by Aaron's rod, of bud and blossom and fruit in a night (Num. xvii. 8). Henceforth the Jewish synagogue is stricken with a perpetual barrenness;† it once was everything, but now it is nothing, to the world; it stands apart,

\* It is possible, and some have thought, that our Lord has another allusion to what here He had done in those words of his, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31); if God so dealt with Him, "a green tree," full of sap, full of life, if He thus bruised and put Him to grief, how should He deal with Israel after the flesh, "the dry" tree, withered and dried up under the power of that curse which had been spoken against it?

† Witsius (*Meletem. Leiden.* p. 415): *Parabolica* *ficūs maledictio significavit, futurum esse ut populus Israëliticus, justū Dei indignatione, omni vigore et succo spiritualis fecunditatis privetur, et quia fructus bonorum operum proferre isthoc tempore noluit, dein nec posset. Ac veluti maledictionis sententiam *ficūs arefactio protinus excepit, sic et Judæorum natio, mox post sp̄etum proterve Messiam, exaruit.**

like “a thing forbid ;” what little it has, it communicates to none ; the curse has come upon it, that no man henceforward shall eat fruit of it for ever.\*

And yet this “*for ever*” has its merciful limitation, when we come to transfer the curse from the tree to that of which the tree was as a living parable ; a limitation which the word itself favours and allows ; which lies hidden in it, to be revealed in due time. None shall eat fruit of that tree to the end of the present æon, not until these “times of the Gentiles” are fulfilled. A day indeed will come when Israel, which now says, “I am a dry tree,” shall consent to that word of its true Lord, which of old it denied, “From *Me* is thy fruit found” (Hos. xiv. 8), and shall be arrayed with the richest foliage and fruit of all the trees of the field. The

\* Augustine brings out often and very strikingly the figurative character of this miracle ;—though, with most other expositors, he misses what seems to me the chief stress of this tree’s (symbolic) guilt, and that which drew on it the curse, namely, its running before its time, and by its leaves proclaiming it had fruit, when its true part and that which the season would have justified, would have been to present itself with neither. He, in the following quotations, otherwise so admirable, makes its real barrenness, contrasted with its pomp of leaves, to be the stress of its fault, putting out of sight the *untimeliness* of those leaves and of that pretence of fruit, which is the most important element in the whole. Thus *Serm. lxxvii. 5*: *Etiam ipsa quæ a Domino facta sunt, aliquid significantia erant, quasi verba, si dici potest, visibilia et aliquid significantia.* Quod maxime apparet in eo quod præter tempus poma quæsivit in arbore, et quia non invenit, arbori maledicens aridam fecit. Hoc factum nisi figuratum accipiatur, stultum invenitur ; primo quæsisse poma in illâ arbore, quando tempus non erat ut essent in illâ arbore : deinde si pomorum jam tempus esset, non habere poma quæ culpa arboris esset ? Sed quia significabat, querere se non solum folia, sed et fructum, id est, non solum verba, sed et facta hominum, arefaciendo ubi sola folia invenit, significavit eorum pœnam, qui loqui bona possunt, facere bona nolunt. Cf. *Serm. xcviij. 3* : *Christus nesciebat, quod rusticus sciebat ? quod noverat arboris cultor, non noverat arboris creator ? Cum ergo esuriens poma quæsivit in arbore, significavit se aliquid esurire, et aliquid aliud querere ; et arborem illam sine fructu foliis plenam reperit, et maledixit ; et aruit. Quid arbor fecerat fructum non afferendo ? Quæ culpa arboris infecunditas ? Sed sunt qui fructum voluntate dare non possunt. Illorum est culpa sterilitas, quorum fecunditas est voluntas.* Cf. *Con. Faust. xxii. 25*.

Lord, in his great discourse upon the last things (Matt. xxiv.), implies this, when He gives this commencing conversion of the Jews under the image of the re-clothing of the bare and withered fig-tree with leaf and bud, as the sign of the breaking in of the new æon, which He does; saying, “Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors” (ver. 32, 33).

It would appear from St. Matthew that some beginnings of the threatened withering began to show themselves, almost as soon as the word of the Lord was spoken; a shuddering fear may have run through all the leaves of the tree, which was thus stricken at its heart. But it was not till the next morning, as the disciples returned, that they took note of the utter perishing of the tree, which had followed upon that word spoken, so that it was “*dried up from the roots,*” and they then called their Lord’s attention to the same: “*Master, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away.*” He will not let the occasion go by without its further lesson. What He had done, they might do the same and more. Faith in God would place them in relation with the same power which He wielded, so that they might do mightier things even than this at which they marvelled so much.

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## 32. THE HEALING OF MALCHUS' EAR.

LUKE xxii. 40 51.

THE blow struck by a disciple, who would fain have fought for his Master, that He should not be delivered to the Jews, is recorded by all four Evangelists (Matt. xxvi. 51; Mark xiv. 47; Luke xxii. 50; John xviii. 10); but the miracle belongs only to St. Luke, for he only tells how the Lord made good the injury which his disciple had inflicted, touched and restored the ear which he had cut off. It is possible that a double interest may have specially moved this Evangelist to include in *his* narrative this work of grace and power. As a physician, this cure, the only one of its kind which we know of our Lord's performing, the only miraculous healing of a wound inflicted by external violence, would attract his special attention. And then, further, nothing lay nearer to his heart, or cohered more intimately with the purpose of his Gospel, than the portraying of the Lord on the side of his gentleness, his mercy, his benignity; and of all these there was an eminent manifestation in this gracious work wrought on behalf of one who was in arms against his life.

The sacred historian, no doubt, knew very well, though he did not think good to set it down in his narrative, whose hand it was that struck this blow,—whether that the deed might still have brought him into trouble, though this appears an exceedingly improbable explanation, or from some other cause. The earlier Evangelists preserve a like silence on this head, and are content with generally designating him, —St. Matthew as “*one of them who were with Jesus,*” St. Mark as “*one of them which stood by.*” And it is only from St. John that we learn, what perhaps otherwise we might have guessed, but could not certainly have known, that it was Peter

who struck this only blow stricken in defence of the Lord.' He also alone gives us the name of the High Priest's servant who was wounded ; "*the servant's name was Malchus.*" It is in entire consistency with all else which we read, that this fact, though unknown to the other Evangelists, should have come within the circle of St. John's knowledge, who had, in some way that is not explained to us, acquaintance with the High Priest (John xviii. 15), and so accurate a knowledge of the constitution of his household as that he was aware that one of those, who later in the night provoked Peter to his denial of Christ, was kinsman of him whose ear Peter had cut off (ver. 26).

The whole incident is singularly characteristic; the *word*-bearer for the rest of the Apostles proves, when occasion requires, the *sword*-bearer also—not indeed in this altogether of a different temper from the others, but showing himself prompter and more daring in action than them all. While they are inquiring, "*Lord, shall we smite with the sword?*" perplexed between the natural instinct of defence and love to their perilled Lord, on the one side, and his precepts that they should not resist the evil, on the other,—he waits not for the answer; but impelled by the natural courage of his heart,\* and taking no heed of the odds against him, aims a blow at one, probably the foremost of the band, the first that was daring to lay profane hands on the sacred person of his Lord. This was "*a servant of the High Priest,*" one therefore who, according to the proverb, "*like master like man,*" may very probably have been especially forward in this bad work,—himself a Caiaphas of a meaner stamp. Peter was not likely to strike with other than a right good will; and no doubt the blow was intended to cleave down the aggressor; though by God's good providence the stroke was turned aside, and grazing the head at which it was aimed, but still coming down with sheer descent, cut off the ear,—the "*right*

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\* Josephus characterizes the Galilæans as *μαχιμούς*.

*ear,*" as St. Luke and St. John tell us,—of the assailant, who thus hardly escaped with his life.

The words with which our Lord rebuked the untimely zeal\* of his disciple are differently given by different Evangelists, or rather they have each given a different portion, each one enough to indicate the spirit in which all was spoken. St. Matthew records them most at length (xxvi. 52-54); while St. Luke passes them over altogether. That moment of uttermost confusion might seem unsuitable for so long a discourse, indeed hardly to have given room for it. We shall best suppose that while the healing of Malchus was proceeding, and all were watching and wondering, the Lord spoke these quieting words to his disciples. Possibly too his captors, who had feared resistance or attempts at rescue on the part of his followers, now that they found his words to be words prohibiting aught of the kind, may have been most willing to suffer Him to speak unhindered. To Peter, and in him to all the other disciples, He says: "*Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.*" Christ, joining

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\* Modern expositors are sometimes much too hard upon this deed of Peter's; Calvin, for instance: *Stulto suo zelo Petrus gravem infamiam magistro suo ejusque doctrinæ inusserat*,—with much more in this tone. The wisest word upon the matter (and on its O.-T. parallel, Exod. ii. 12) is to be found in Augustine, *Con. Faust.* xxii. 70. He keeps as far from this unmeasured rebuke as from the extravagance of Romish expositors, who exalt and magnify this act as one of a holy and righteous indignation; liken it to the act of Phinehas (Num. xxv. 7) by which he won the high priesthood for his family for ever. Leo the Great (*Serm. l. 4*) had here already led the way: *Nam et beatus Petrus, qui animosiore constantiâ Domino cohærebat, et contra violentorum impetus fervore sanctæ caritatis exarserat, in servum principis sacerdotum usus est gladio, et aurem viri ferocius instantis abscidit.* Another finds in the words of the Lord, "*Put up thy sword into his place*," a sanction for the wielding of the civil sword by the Church; for, as he bids us note, Christ does not say, "*Put away thy sword;*" but "*Put up thy sword into his place*,"—that is, "*Keep it in readiness to draw forth again, when the right occasion shall arrive.*" Tertullian, in an opposite extreme, concludes from these words that the military service is always unlawful for the Christian (*De Idolol.* 19): *Omnem militem Dominus in Petro exarmando discinxit.*

together the taking of the sword and the perishing by the sword, refers, no doubt, to the primal law, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. ix. 6; cf. Rev. xiii. 10). • The words have been sometimes wrongly understood, as though the Lord were pacifying Peter with considerations such as these, "There is no need for thee to assume the task of punishing these violent men : they have taken the sword, and by the just judgment of God they will perish by the sword."\* But the warning against taking the sword connects itself so closely with the command, "*Put up again thy sword into his place;*" and the meaning of the verse following (Matt. xxvi. 53) is so plainly, "Thinkest thou that I need a feeble help like thine, when, instead of you, twelve weak trembling men, inexpert in war, I might even now at this latest moment *pray to my Father, and He will presently give Me† more than twelve legions‡ of Angels* to fight on my behalf?"§—that all the ingenuity which Grotius and others

\* Thus Grotius : *Noli, Petre, consideratione ejus quæ mihi infertur injuriæ concitatiōr, Deo præripere ultiōnem.* *Levia enim sunt vulnera quæ a te pati possunt.* Stat enim rata sententia, crudeles istos et sanguinarios, etiam te quiescente, gravissimas Deo daturas pœnas suo sanguine. This interpretation is a good deal older than Grotius. It is, I think, Chrysostom's; and Euthymius sees in these words a προφητεία τῆς διαφθορᾶς τῶν ἐπελθόντων αὐτῷ Ἰονδαίων.

† *Kai παραστήσει μοι*—et servitio meo sistet (Rom. vi. 19 ; xii. 1).

‡ The phrase is remarkable, when connected with the expression πλῆθος στρατῶν οὐρανίου (Luke ii. 13), and some other similar language. Without falling in with the dreams of the Areopagite, we may see here intimations of a hierarchy in heaven. Bengel: *Angeli in suos numeros et ordines divisi sunt.*

§ Jerome : *Non indigeo duodecim Apostolorum auxilio, qui possum habere duodecim legiones angelici exercitūs.* Maldonatus : *Mihi quidem verosimile videtur Christum angelos non militibus, sed discipulis opponere, qui duodecim erant, ac propterea duodecim non plures nec pauciores legiones nomināsse, ut indicaret posse se pro duodecim hominibus duodecim legiones habere.* The fact that the number of Apostles who were even tempted to draw sword in Christ's behalf was, by the apostasy of Judas, reduced now to eleven, need not remove us from this interpretation. The Lord contemplates them in their ideal completeness ; for it was no accident, but rested on a deep fitness, that they were twelve, and neither fewer nor more. He does

use, and it is much, to recommend the other interpretation, cannot persuade to its acceptance. This mention of the “*twelve legions of Angels*,” whom it was free to Him to summon to his aid, brings the passage into striking relation with 2 Kin. vi. 17. A greater than Elisha is here, and thus speaking would open the spiritual eye of his troubled disciple, and show him the mount of God, full of chariots and horses of fire, armies of heaven which are camping round his Lord, and whom a beck from Him would bring forth, to the utter discomfiture of his enemies. “*But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*” The temptation to claim the assistance of that heavenly host,—supposing Him to have felt the temptation,—is quelled in an instant; for how then should that eternal purpose, that will of God, of which Scripture was the outward expression, “*that thus it must be,*” have then been fulfilled? (cf. Zech. xiii. 7). In St. John the same entire subordination of his own will to his Father’s, which must hinder Him from claiming this unreasonable help, finds its utterance under another image; “*The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*” This language is frequent in Scripture, resting on the image of some potion which, however bitter, must yet be drained. Besides Matt. xx. 22, 23; xxvi. 39, where the cup is one of holy suffering, there is often, especially in the O. T., mention of the cup of God’s anger (Isai. li. 17, 22; Ps. xi. 6; lxxv. 8; Jer. xxv. 15, 17; xl ix. 12; Lam. iv. 21; Rev. xiv. 10; xvi. 19); in every case the cup being one from which flesh and blood shrinks back, which a man would fain put away from his lips, though a moral necessity in the case of the godly, and a physical in that of the ungodly, will not suffer it to be thus put aside.

The words that follow, “*Suffer ye thus far,*” are to be

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the same, saying in another place, “*Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*” (Matt. xix. 28; cf. Luke xxii. 30)—when, in like manner, it was not Judas, but his successor, that should occupy a throne.

accepted as addressed still to the disciples: "Hold now;\* thus far ye have gone in resistance, but let it be no further; no more of this." The other explanation, which makes them to have been spoken by the Lord to those into whose hands He had come, that they should bear with Him till He had accomplished the cure, has nothing to recommend it. Having thus checked the too forward zeal of his disciples, and now carrying out into act his own precept, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," He touched the ear of the wounded man, "*and healed him.*" Peter and the rest meanwhile, after this brief flash of a carnal courage, forsook their divine Master, and, leaving Him in the hands of his enemies, fled,—the wonder of the crowd at that gracious work of the Lord, or the tumult, with the darkness of the night, or these both together, favouring their escape.

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\* A comma should find place after *ear*.

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### 33. THE SECOND MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

JOHN xxi. 1-23.

IT almost seemed as though St. John's Gospel had found its solemn completion in the words (ver. 30, 31) with which the preceding chapter ended; so that this chapter appears, and probably is, in the exactest sense of the word, *a postscript*, —something which the beloved Apostle, after he had made an end, thought it important not to leave untold; which he may have added, perhaps, at the request of his disciples, who, having often heard delightedly the narrative from his own lips, desired that before his departure he should set it down, that the Church might be enriched with it for ever.\* Or, if

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\* Doubts concerning the authenticity of this chapter were first stirred by Grotius; not that he esteemed it altogether spurious, but added, probably after St. John's death, by the Ephesian elders, who had often heard the history from his lips. Very unlike the other suspicious passage in St. John's Gospel (viii. 1-11), there is no outward evidence of any kind against it. Every MS. and every early Version possesses it, and there was never a doubt expressed about it in antiquity. He therefore, and those who have followed him here, Clericus, Semler, Lücke, Schott (*Comm. de Indole Cap. ult. Ev. Joh. Jen. 1825*), can have none but internal evidences, drawn from alleged differences in style, in language, in manner of expression, from St. John's confessed writings, on which to build an argument,—evidences frequently deceptive and always inconclusive, but here even weaker than usual. Everywhere we mark the hand of the beloved disciple. Not merely do we feel the tone of the narration to be his; for that might be explained by supposing others to be reporting what he had often told them; but single phrases and turns of language, unobserved by us at first, and till we have such motives for observing them, bear witness for him. It is he alone who uses Τιβερίας, θάλασσα τῆς Τιβερίαδος (vi. 1, 23) for the lake of Galilee; or παιδία as a word of address from the teacher to the taught (cf. ver. 5 with 1 John ii. 13, 18); πιάζειν, which occurs twice in this chapter (ver. 3, 10), is met with only three times, save in St. John's writings, in the whole N. T.; but is so much a favourite with him, that besides these, there are six instances of its use in his Gospel alone (vii. 30, 32, 44; viii. 20; x.

we call John i. 1-14 the prologue, this we might style the epilogue, of his Gospel. As that set forth what the Son of God was before. He came from the Father, even so this, in mystical and prophetic guise, how He should rule in the world after He had returned to the Father.

It was upon the sea of Galilee that this appearance of Christ to his disciples, with the miracle which accompanied it, took place. There "*Jesus showed\* Himself again to the disciples.*" Doubtless there is a significance in the words, "*showed Himself,*" or "*manifested Himself,*" which many long ago observed,—no other than this, that his body after the resurrection was only visible by a distinct act of his will. From that time the disciples did not, as before, *see Jesus*, but *Jesus appeared unto, or was seen by, them.* It is not for nothing that the language is changed, or that in language of this kind all his appearances after the resurrection are related (Luke xxiv. 34; Acts xiii. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 5-8). It is the same with Angels and all heavenly manifestations. Men do not *see them*; such language would be inappropriate; but they *appear to men* (Judg. vi. 12; xiii. 3, 10, 21; Matt. xvii. 3; Luke i. 11; xxii. 43; Acts ii. 3; vii. 2; xvi. 9; xxvi. 16); are only visible to those for whose sakes they are vouchsafed,

39; xi. 57), to which may be added Rev. xix. 20. Again, ἐλκύω (ver. 6, 11) is one of his words (vi. 44; xii. 32; xviii: 20), being found else but once. The double ἀμήν at the beginning of a sentence (ver. 18) is exclusively St. John's, occurring twenty-five times in his Gospel, never elsewhere. The appellation of Thomas, Θωμᾶς ὁ λεγόμενος Δίδυμος (ver. 2; cf. xi. 16; xx. 24), is also exclusively his: compare too ver. 19 with xii. 23 and xviii. 32; the use also of ὅμοιως (ver. 18) with the parallel use at vi. 11. Οὐψάριον too (ver. 9, 10, 13; cf. vi. 9, 11), and πάλιν δεύτερον (ver. 16; cf. iv. 54), belong only to him; and the narrator interposing words of his own, as a comment on and explanation of the Lord's words (ver. 19), is quite after the favourite manner of St. John (ii. 21; vi. 6; vii. 39). And of these peculiarities many more might be adduced.

\* This ἐφανέρωσεν ἔαντόν of his last miracle the Evangelist intends us, I cannot doubt, to bring into relation with the ἐφανέρωσε τὴν δόξαν of his first (ii. 11); which being so, our Version should have preserved, as a hint of this to the English reader, the "manifested" which it there employs.

and to whom they are willing to show themselves.\* Those to whom this manifestation was vouchsafed were Simon Peter, Thomas, and Nathanael, James and John, and two other disciples that are not named. It makes something for the current opinion that the Nathanael of St. John is the Bartholomew of the other Evangelists, thus to find him named not after, but in the midst of, some of the very chiefest Apostles. Who were the two unnamed disciples cannot, of course, be known. They too were not improbably Apostles, “*disciples*” in the most eminent sense of the word;† Lightfoot supposes that they were Andrew and Philip.

The announcement of Peter, “*I go a-fishing*,” is not, as has been strangely supposed, a declaration that he has lost his hope in Jesus as the Messiah, has renounced his apostleship, and now returns to his old occupations, there being no nobler work for him in store. A teacher in that new kingdom which his Lord had set up, he is acting now in the wise manner of the Jewish Rabbis, who were wont to have a manual trade, on which to fall back in the time of need. What good service St. Paul’s skill in making tents did him is well known (2 Thess. iii. 8). Probably also they found it healthful to their own minds, to have some outward occupation for which to exchange at times their spiritual employments. In these words of St. Peter there lay a challenge to the old companions of his toil, which is alone accepted by them: “*They say unto him, We also go with thee. They*

\* Thus Ambrose on the appearing of the Angel to Zacharias (*Exp. in Luc.* i. 24): *Bene apparuisse dicitur ei, qui eum repente conspexit. Et hoc specialiter aut de Angelis aut de Deo Scriptura divina tenere consuevit; ut quod non potest prævideri, apparere dicatur. . . . Non enim similiter sensibilia videntur, et is in cuius voluntate situm est videri, et cuius naturæ est non videri, voluntatis videri. Nam si non vult, non videtur: si vult, videtur.* And Chrysostom here: ‘Ἐν τῷ εἰπεῖν, ἐφανέρωσεν ἑαυτὸν, τοῦτο δῆλοι, ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἥθελε, καὶ αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν διὰ σηγκατάβασιν ἐφανέρωσεν, οὐχ ὡράτο, τοῦ σώματος ὅντος ἀφθάρτου.

† St. John nowhere employs ἀπόστολος to distinguish one of the Twelve. He uses it but once (xiii. 16), and then generally for one *outsent*.

*went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.*" It was with them now, as it had been with the chiefest among them on a prior occasion (Luke v. 5). Already a dim feeling may have risen up in their minds that this night was a spiritual counterpart of that other; and as that was followed by a glorious day, and by their first installation in their great work as "fishers of men," this present ill-success of theirs may have had its part in preparing their spirits for that wondrous glimpse which should now be given them, of what that work, and what its reward, should be. Had it been, however, more than the obscurest presentiment, they would have been more quick to recognize their Lord, when with the early dawn He "*stood on the shore.*" But their eyes were holden; "*the disciples knew not that it was Jesus;*" He was to them but as a stranger, an early traveller, it might be, upon the shores of the lake. And in the language of such He addressed them; "*Children, have ye any meat?*" Chrysostom singularly enough supposes that He puts this question as one that would purchase from them of the fruit of their night's toil, if such they had to dispose of: but rather, I should imagine, as with that natural and friendly interest, not unmixed with curiosity, which almost all take in the results of toils which are proverbially uncertain in their issue; which are now utterly without result, now crowned with largest success. "*They answered Him, No.*" The purpose of the question was to draw forth this acknowledgment from their lips; for in small things as well as great, in natural as well as spiritual, it is well that there should go first the confessions of man's poverty before there come in the riches of God's bounty and grace.

*"And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find."* And they, not accepting it for more than the counsel of a kind and, it might be, a skilful stranger, were obedient to his word: "*They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of*

*fishes.*" But this is enough; there is one disciple at least, "*that disciple whom Jesus loved,*" who can no longer doubt with whom they have to do. That other occasion, when at the bidding of their future Lord they enclosed so great a multitude of fishes that their net brake, rose clear before his eyes: It is the same Lord, in whose presence now they stand. And he says, not yet to all, but to Peter, to him with whom he stood in nearest fellowship, who had best right to be first made partaker of the discovery, "*It is the Lord.*" Each Apostle comes wonderfully out in his proper character: \* he of the eagle eye first detects the presence of the Beloved; and then Peter, the foremost ever in act, as John is profoundest in speculation, unable to wait till the ship shall touch the land, throws himself into the sea, that he may find himself the sooner at his Saviour's feet (Matt. xiv. 28). He was before "*naked,*" stripped, that is, for labour, wearing only the tunic, or garment close to the skin, and having put off his upper and superfluous garments; † for "*naked*" means no more, and is continually used in this sense; but now he girded himself with his fisher's coat, ‡ as counting it unseemly

\* Chrysostom: Ως δὲ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτὸν, πάλιν τὰ ἰδιώματα τῶν οἰκείων ἐπιδείκνυνται τρόποι οἱ μαθηταὶ Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης· ὁ μὲν γὰρ θερμότερος, ὁ δὲ ὑψηλότερος ἦν· καὶ ὁ μὲν ὀξύτερος ἦν, ὁ δὲ διορατικότερος.

† The word is of continual use in this sense. Thus Virgil: *Nudus* *ara* (cf. Matt. xxiv. 18), which he has borrowed from Hesiod, who will have the husbandman *γυμνὸν σπείρειν*, *γυμνὸν τε βωατεῖν*. So, too, Cincinnatus was found "naked" at the plough, when he was called to be Dictator, and sent for his toga that he might present himself before the Senate (Pliny, *H. N.* xviii. 4); and Plutarch says of Phocion, that, in the country and with the army, he went always without sandals and "naked" (*ἀννπόδητος* *ἀεὶ καὶ γυμνὸς ἐβάδιζεν*): and Grotius quotes from Eusebius a yet apter passage than any of these, in which one says, *ἥμην γυμνὸς ἐν τῷ λινῷ ἐσθήματι*. The Athenian jest that the Spartans showed to foreigners their virgins "naked" is to be taken with these limitations—with only the chiton or himation (Müller, *Dorians*, iv. 2, 3). Cf. 1 Sam. xix. 24.; Isai. xx. 3; at the last of which passages the Deist Tindal, in his ignorance, scoffs, as though God had commanded an indecency, but which both are to be explained in the same manner (see Deyling, *Obss. Sac.* vol. iv. p. 888, seq., and the *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antt.* s. v. *Nudus*).

‡ This seems to me the meaning; in Deyling's words (*Obss. Sac.*

to appear without it in the presence of his Lord.\* Some have supposed that he walked on the sea; but we have no right to multiply miracles, and the words, “*cast himself into the sea*,” do not warrant this. Rather, he swam and waded to the shore,† which was not distant more than about “*two hundred cubits*,”‡ that is, about one hundred yards. The other disciples followed more slowly; for they were encumbered with the net and its weight of fishes. This, having renounced the hope of lifting it into the boat, they dragged§ after them in the water, toward the land. “*As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread*”—by what ministry, natural or miraculous, has been often inquired; but we can only leave this undetermined, as we find it. “*Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.*” These shall be added to those already preparing.|| Peter, again the foremost, drew

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vol. iv. p. 890) : Ἐπενδύτην ad Christum iturus sibi circumjiciebat, ne minus honestus et modestus in conspectum Domini veniret. Others, however, as Euthymius and Lampe, suppose that this ἐπενδύτης was the only garment which he had on; but, as regarded even that, he was ἄξωστος, and so, in a manner, γυμνός. But going to the Lord, he girt it up; whether for comeliness, or that it might not, being left loose, hinder him in swimming. The matter would be clear, if we knew certainly what the ἐπενδύτης was;—plainly no *under* garment or vest, worn close to the skin, which is rather ὑποδύτης (see Passow, s. vv.) ; but rather that worn *over all*, as the robe which Jonathan gives to David is called τὸν ἐπενδύτην τὸν ἐπάνω (1 Sam. xviii. 4). This is certainly the simplest explanation; that Peter, being stripped before, now hastily threw his upper garment over him, which yet he girt up, that it might not prove an impediment in swimming.

\* Ambrose: Immemor periculi, non tamen immemor reverentiae.

† Id.: Periculoso compendio religiosum maturavit obsequium.

‡ Ovid's advice to the fisher is to keep this moderate distance:

Nec tamen in medias pelagi te pergere sedes

Admoneam, vastique maris tentare profundum.

Inter utrumque loci melius moderabere finem, &c.

§ Observe St. John's fine and accurate distinction in the use of σύρειν here, and ἔλκειν at ver. 6, 11; this being to *draw to you* (ziehen, De Wette); that, to *drag after you* (nachsleppen): see my *Synonyms of the N. T.* § 21.

|| To the abundance and the excellency of the fish in this lake many bear testimony. Thus Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, vol. ii. p.

up the net, which was fastened, no doubt, to the ship, on the beach. The very number of the fish it contained, "*an hundred and fifty and three,*" is mentioned, with also the remarkable circumstance, that although they were so many and so large,—"*great fishes,*"—yet, differently from that former occasion (Luke v. 6), the net was not broken by their weight, nor by their struggles to escape.

It is well nigh incredible that all this should have happened, or should have been recorded for us at once with this emphasis and this minuteness of detail, had the meaning which is ostensible and on the surface been the only one which it contained. There must be more here than meets the eye—an allegorical, or more truly a symbolic, meaning underlying the literal. Nor is this very hard to discover. Without pledging myself for every detail of Augustine's interpretation,\* it yet commends itself to me as in the main worthy of all acceptance. He puts this miraculous draught of fishes in relation of likeness and unlikeness with the other before the resurrection, and sees in that earlier, the figure of the Church as it now is, and as it now gathers its members from the world; in this later the figure of the Church as it shall be in the end of the world, with the great incoming, the great sea-harvest of souls, which then shall find place.† On that

261) : "The lake is full of fishes of various kinds," and he instances sturgeon, chub, and bream; adding, "we had no difficulty in procuring an abundant supply for our evening and morning meal; and found them delicate and well-flavoured."

\* Augustine (*Serm. ccxlviii. 1*): *Nunquam hoc Dominus juberet, nisi aliquid significare vellet, quod nobis nosse expediret. Quid ergo pro magno potuit ad Jesum Christum pertinere, si pisces caperentur aut si non caperentur? Sed illa piscatio, nostra erat significatio.*

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. cxxii.*): *Sicut hoc loco qualiter in seculi fine futura sit [Ecclesia], ita Dominus aliâ piscatione significavit Ecclesiam qualiter nunc sit. Quod autem illud fecit in initio prædicationis suæ, hoc vero post resurrectionem suam, hinc ostendit illam capturam piscium, bonos et malos significare, quos nunc habet Ecclesia; istam vero tantummodo bonos quos habebit in æternum, completa in fine hujus seculi resurrectione mortuorum. Denique ibi Jesus, non sicut hic in littore stabat, quando jussit pisces capi, sed*

first occasion the future fishers of men were not particularly bidden to cast the net on the right hand or on the left; for, had Christ said to the right, it would have implied that none should be taken but the good,—if to the left, that only the bad; while yet in the present mixed condition of the Church, both bad and good are enclosed in the nets; but now He says, “*Cast the net on the right side of the ship,*” implying that now all who are taken should be good.\* Then the nets were broken with the multitude of fishes, so that all were not secured which once were within them;—and what are the schisms and divisions of the present condition of the Church, but rents and holes through which numbers, that impatiently bear the restraints of the net, break away from it?—but now, in the end of time, “*for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.*” On that first occasion the fish were brought into the ship, itself still tossed

ascendens in unam navim . . . dixit ad Simonem, Due in altum, et laxate retia vestra in capturam . . . Ibi retia non mittuntur in dexteram, ne solos significant bonos, nec in sinistram, ne solos malos; sed indifferenter, Laxate, inquit, retia vestra in capturam, ut permixtos intelligamus bonos et malos: hic autem inquit, Mittite in dextram navigii rete, ut significaret eos qui stabant ad dexteram, solos bonos. Ibi rete propter significanda schismata rumpebatur: hic vero, quoniam tune jam in illâ summa pace sanctorum nulla erunt schismata, pertinuit ad Evangelistam dicere, Et cum tanti essent, id est, tam magni, non est scissum rete; tanquam illud respiceret ubi scissum est, et in illius mali comparatione commendaret hoc bonum. Cf. *Serm. cclviii.-cclii.*; and also the *Brev. Coll. con. Donat.* 3; *Quæst.* 83, qu. 8; and Gregory the Great (*Hom. in Evang.* 24), who altogether follows the exposition of Augustine, making indeed far more of Peter’s part, especially of his bringing of the net to land, which is easily to be accounted for, the idea of the Papacy having in his time developed itself further.

\* This, because the *right* hand is ever the hand of value; thus the sheep are placed at the *right* hand (Matt. xxv. 33). Even the *right* eye, if needs is, shall be plucked out,—the *right* hand cut off (Matt. v. 29, 30). Again, it is threatened that even the *right* eye of the idol shepherd, the eye of spiritual understanding, shall be utterly darkened (Zech. xi. 17). Ezekiel lies on his left side for Israel, but on his *right*, for Judah (Ezek. iv. 4, 6); and this because Judah, with all its sins, was not yet an apostate Church (Hos. xi. 12: cf. Gen. xlvi. 17; 1 Kin. ii. 10; Acts vii. 55).

on the unquiet sea, even as men in the present time who are taken for Christ are brought into the Church, still itself exposed to the world's tempests; but here the nets are drawn up to land, to the safe and quiet shore of eternity.\* Then the ships were well nigh sunken with their burden, for so is it with the ship of the Church,—encumbered with evil-livers till it well nigh makes shipwreck altogether; but nothing of this is mentioned here.† There it is merely mentioned that a great multitude were enclosed; but here a definite number, even as the number of the elect is fixed and pre-ordained;‡ and there small fishes and great, for nothing to the contrary is said; but here they are all "*great*," for such shall all be that attain to that kingdom, being equal to the Angels.§

\* Augustine (*Serm. eccl. 3*): In illâ piseatione non ad littus adtracta sunt retia: sed ipsi pisces qui capti sunt, in naviculas fusi sunt. Hic autem traxerunt ad littus. Spera finem seculi. Grotius has a glimpse of the same thought, when upon the words, "Jesus stood on the shore" (ver. 4), he adds: Significans se per resurrectionem jam esse in vado, ipsos in salo versari. Cf. Gregory the Great, *Hom. xxiv. in Evang.*

† Augustine (*Serm. cclxix.*): Impletur navigia duo propter populos duos de circumcisione et præputio: et sic impletur, ut premantur et pœne mergantur. Hoc quod significat gemendum est. Turba turbavit Ecclesiam. Quam magnum numerum fecerunt male viventes, prementes et *gementes* [pœne mergentes?]. Sed propter pisces bonos non sunt mersa navigia.

‡ Augustine and others have laborious calculations to show why the fishes were exactly one hundred and fifty-three, and the mystery of this number. But the significance is not in that particular number, for the number seems chosen to exclude this, herein unlike the hundred and forty-four thousand ( $12 \times 12$ ) of the Apocalypse (vii. 4); but in its being a fixed and definite number at all: just as in Ezekiel's temple (ch. xl. seq.) each measurement is not, and cannot be made, significant; but that all is by measurement is most significant; for thus we are taught that in the rearing of the spiritual temple no caprice or wilfulness of men may find room, but that all is laid down according to a pre-ordained purpose and will of God. To number, as to measure and to weigh, is a Divine attribute: cf. Job xxviii. 25; xxxviii. 5; Isai. xl. 12; and the noble debate in St. Augustine (*De Lib. Arbit. ii. 11-16*) on all the works of wisdom being by number.

§ Augustine (*Serm. ccclviii. 3*): Quis est enim ibi, tunc parvus, quando erunt æquales Angelis Dei?

That which follows is obscure, and without the key which the symbolical explanation supplies, would be obscurer yet. What is the meaning of this meal which they found ready prepared for them on the shore, with the Lord's invitation that they should "*come and dine*"? For Him, with his risen body, it was superfluous, and not needed by them, whose dwellings were near at hand. But we must continue to see an under-meaning, and a rich and deep one, in all this. As that large capture of fish was to them the pledge and promise of a labour that should not be in vain,\* so the meal, when the labour was done, a meal of the Lord's own preparing, and "*upon the shore*," was the symbol of the great festival in heaven with which, after their earthly toil was over, He would refresh his servants, when He should cause them to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom. And as they were bidden to bring of their fish to that meal, so should the souls which they had taken for life be their crown and rejoicing in that day, should help and contribute to their gladness then.†

*"And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord."* But if they knew, why should they have desired to make this inquiry, being only hindered from that by the solemn fear and awe which was shed on

\* Maldonatus: Missurus erat paulo post Christus discipulos suos in omnem terrarum orbem, quasi in altum ac latum mare, ut homines piscaarentur. Poterant inscitiam, poterant imbecillitatem suam excusare, sc̄ homines esse litterarum rudes, id est, piscandi imperitos, paucos præterea et infirmos, quī posse se tot tamque grandes pisces capere, tot oratores, tot tantosque philosophos irretire et a sententiā dimovere? Voluit ergo Christus exemplo artis propriæ docere id ipsos suis viib⁹ suāque industriā facere nullo modo posse, idque significat quod totam laborantes noctem nihil cuperant; ipsius vero ope atque auxilio facilime facturos.

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. exxiii.*): Piscis assus, Christus est passus. Ipse est et panis qui de cœlo descendit. Hinc incorporatur Ecclesia ad participandam beatitudinem sempiternam. Ammonius: Τὸ, Δεῦτε ἀριστεύσατε, αἰνύγμα ἔχει ὁ λόγος, ὅτι μετὰ τὸν πόνον διαδέξεται τὸν ἄγιον ἀνάπτανσις καὶ τρυφὴ καὶ ἀπόλανσις. Gregory the Great (*Hom. xxiv. in Evang.*) notes how the number who here feast with the Lord are seven, the number of perfection and completion.

them by his presence? The words, as I take it, mean that none dared show so much of unbelief and uncertainty as would have been involved in the question, "*Who art Thou?*" There was shed over them such a mysterious awe, such a sense of the presence of their beloved Master, witnessing for itself in the inmost depths of their spirits, that, unusual and unlike as was his outward appearance to that whereunto their eyes were accustomed, none of them, for all this, durst ask for a clearer evidence that it was He, even though it would have been a satisfaction to them to hear from his own lips that it was indeed Himself and no other.\*

The most interesting conversation which follows hangs too closely upon this miracle to be omitted. Christ has opened the eyes of his servants to the greatness of their future work, given to them a prophetic glimpse of their successful labour and their abundant reward; and He now declares to them the sole conditions under which this work may be accomplished, and this reward inherited. Love to Christ, and the unreserved yielding up of self to God—these are the sole conditions, and all which follows is to teach this: so that the two portions of the chapter are intimately connected, and together form a complete whole. "*So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?*" In that compellation, "*Simon, son of Jonas,*" there was already that which must have wrung the Apostle's heart. It was as though his Lord would say to him, "Where is that name Peter, which I gave thee (Matt. xvi. 18; John i. 42)?"

\* Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. cxxiii.*): Si ergo sciebant, quid opus erat ut interrogarent? Si autem non opus erat, quare dictum est, non audebant; quasi opus esset, sed timore aliquo non audent? Sensus ergo hic est: Tanta erat evidentia veritatis, quâ Jesus illis discipulis apparebat, ut eorum non solum negare, sed nec dubitare quidem ullus auderet: quoniam si quisquam dubitaret, utique interrogare deberet. Sic ergo dictum est, Nemo audebat eum interrogare, Tu quis es: ac si diceretur, Nemo audebat dubitare quod ipse esset. Cf. Chrysostom's striking words, *In Joh. Hom. lxxxvii.*

where is the Rock, and the rock-like strength, which, when most needed, I looked for in vain (Matt. xxvi. 69-75)? not therefore by that name can I address thee now, but as flesh and blood, and the child of man; for all that was higher in thee has disappeared." We read of one of the Caliphs\* that "he used to give his principal officers an honourable surname suited to their qualities; when he wished to show his dissatisfaction, he used to drop it, calling them by their own names; this caused them great alarm. When he resumed the employment of the surname, it was a sign of their return to favour." This passage helps us, I think, to enter into the significance of that "*Simon, son of Jonas*" here.

The question, "*Lovest thou Me more than these?*"† is a plain allusion to Peter's boasting speech, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matt. xxvi. 33); as is evident from Peter's answer, wherein appealing to the Lord, the Searcher of hearts, that indeed he loves Him, he no longer casts any slight by comparison on the love of his fellow-disciples.‡ The main object of the Lord in his rejoinder, "*Feed my sheep*," "*Feed my lambs*," is not to say, "*Show then thy love in act*," but rather, "*I restore to thee thy apostolic function; this grace is thine, that thou shalt yet be a chief shepherd of my flock.*"§

\* In *The Modern Syrians*, p. 304.

† Πλεῖον τούτων. This might mean—"more than thou lovest *these things*," i. e. "more than thou lovest these thy nets and thy boat and other worldly gear;" plus *his*, as the Vulgate. But the words, so understood, yield a sense which is, at least to my mind, so utterly trivial and unworthy, as to render it not unlikely only, but impossible, that this can be the Lord's meaning. Whitby supports this interpretation.

‡ Augustine (*Serm. cxlvii. 2*): Non potuit dicere nisi, Amo te: non ausus est dicere, plus his. Noluit iterum esse mendax. Sufficerat ei testimonium perhibere cordi suo: non debuit esse judex cordis alieni.

§ The other, doubtless, is the way in which the words are more commonly understood; thus by Augustine a hundred times, as *Serm. cxlii. 1*: Tamquam ei diceret, Amas me? In hoc ostende quia amas me, Pasce oves meas. But Cyril, Chrysostom, Euthymius, are with

It implies, therefore, the fullest forgiveness of the past, since none but the forgiven could rightly declare the forgiveness of God. The question, “*Lovest thou Me?*”\* is thrice repeated, that by three solemn affirmations he may efface his three denials of his Lord.† At last, upon the third repetition of

me. Thus, too, Calvin: *Nunc illi tam libertas docendi quam auctoritas restituitur, quarum utramque amiserat suā culpā.*

\* It will be observed that when the Lord first puts the question to Peter, it is ἀγαπᾶς με; that Peter changes the word, and replies, φιλῶ σε (ver. 15); again the second time ἀγαπᾶς appears in the Lord's question, and φιλῶ in Peter's reply (ver. 16); till on the third time Jesus leaves the ἀγαπᾶς which He has twice used, and asks the question in Peter's own word, φιλεῖς με; in which Peter again for the third time replies (ver. 17). There is nothing accidental here, as will be plain from a short consideration of the relation in which ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν stand to one another. There exists in them nearly the same difference as in the *diligere* and *amare* of the Latin (see Döderlein, *Lat. Synon.* vol. iv. p. 89, seq.; and my *Synonyms of the N. T.* § 12); the Vulgate marking by help of these Latin equivalents the alternation of the words. Ἀγαπᾶν=diligere (= diligere) has more of judgment and deliberate choice; φιλεῖν=amare, of attachment and peculiar personal affection. Thus the ἀγαπᾶς on the lips of the Lord seems to Peter at this moment too cold a word; as though his Lord were keeping him at a distance; or at least not inviting him to draw as near as in the passionate yearning of his heart he desired now to do. Therefore he puts it by, and substitutes his own stronger φιλῶ in its room. A second time he does the same. And now he has conquered; for when the Lord demands a third time whether he loves Him, He does it with the word which alone will satisfy Peter, which alone claims from him that personal attachment and affection, with which indeed he knows that his heart is full. Ambrose, though he does not express himself very happily, has a right insight into the matter (*Exp. in Luc.* x. 176): *Illud quod diligenter intuendum, eur cum Dominus dixerit, Diligis me? ille responderit: Tu sis, Domine, quia amo te. In quo videtur mihi dilectio habere animi caritatem, amor quendam aestum conceptum corporis ac mentis ardore, et Petrum opinor non solum animi, sed etiam corporis sui signare flagrantiam.*

† Augustine (*In Ev. Joh. tract. cxxiii.*): *Redditur negationi trinæ trina confessio; ne minus amori lingua serviat quam timori: et plus vocis elicuisse videatur mors imminens, quam vita præsens. Enarr. in Ps. xxxvii. 13: Donec trinā voce amoris solveret trinam vocem negationis. Serm. cclxxxv.: Odit Deus præsumtores de viribus suis; et tumorem istum in eis, quos diligit, tamquam medicus secat. Secando quidem infert dolorem; sed firmat postea sanitatem. Itaque resurgens Dominus commendat Petro oves suas illi negatori; sed*

the question, “*Peter was grieved;*” and with yet more emphasis than before appeals to the omniscience of his Lord, whether it was not true that indeed he loved Him: “*Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.*”\*

Many have denied that there is any ground for the distinction often drawn between the two commissions, “*Feed my sheep,*” and “*Feed my lambs.*”† But to me nothing seems more natural than that by “*lambs*” the Lord intended the

negatori quia præsumtori, postea pastori quia amatori. Nam quare ter interrogat amantem, nisi ut compungat ter negantem? *Serm. ccxcv. 4:* Ter vineat in amore confessio, quia ter victa est in timore præsumtio. Cf. *Enarr. ii. in Ps. xc. 12.* So Cyril, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Apollinaris, and Ammonius: Διὰ τριῶν τῶν ἐρωτήσεων καὶ καταθέσεων ἔξαλείφει τὰς τρεῖς φωνὰς τῆς ἀρνήσεως, καὶ διὰ λόγων ἐπανορθοῖ τὰ ἐν λόγοις χενύμενα πταισμάτα. Not otherwise the Church hymn—

Ter confessus ter negatum,  
Gregem pascis ter donatum,  
Vitū, verbo, precibus.

\* Augustine (*Serm. ecliii. 1*): Contristatus est Petrus. Quid contristaris, Petre, quia ter respondes amorem? Oblitus es trinum timorem? Sine interroget te Dominus: medicus est qui te interrogat, ad sanitatem pertinet, quod interrogat. Noli tædio affici. Expecta, impleatur numerus dilectionis, ut debeat numerum negationis.

† The lectio recepta makes the order in Christ’s threefold commission to Peter that he should feed the flock, to be the following: ἄρνια (ver. 15), πρόβατα (ver. 16), and again πρόβατα (ver. 17). Tischendorf, on the authority of A C, for the last πρόβατα reads προβάτια, which word, never else occurring in the N. T., would scarcely have found its way here into the text unless it had belonged to it of right. Yet at the same time the three words in the order in which they thus appear, ἄρνια, πρόβατα, προβάτια, fail altogether to make a climax; and one is tempted to suspect that προβάτια and πρόβατα have changed places; for if this could be admitted, all then would follow excellently well. Remarkably confirming this conjecture, first made, I believe, by Bellarmine, St. Ambrose (*Exp. in Luc. x. 176*), expounding Christ’s words here, uses the Latin equivalents exactly in this order; first agnos=ἄρνια, then oviculas=προβάτια, and lastly oves=πρόβατα; nor is this an accident, but he makes a point of this ascending scale, saying on that third injunction, “Feed my sheep.” Et jam non agnos, nec oviculas, sed oves pascere jubetur. It is further noticeable that the Vulgate has not one agnos and two oves, which would be the equivalent to our received reading, but two agnos and one oves, which is much nearer that which is conjectured. In the Peschito, justly celebrated for its verbal accuracy, there is a difference made, exactly answering to Ambrose’s agnos, oviculas, and oves.

more imperfect Christians, the little children in Him ; by the “*sheep*” the more advanced, the “young men” and “fathers.”\* The interpretation indeed is groundless and trifling, made in the interests of Rome, as though the “*lambs*” were the laity, and the “*sheep*” the clergy; and that here to Peter, and in him to the Roman pontiffs, was given dominion over both. The commission should at least have run, “*Feed my sheep*,” “*Feed my shepherds*,” if any such conclusions were to be drawn from it, though an infinite deal would still require to be assumed.†

But “*Feed my sheep*” is not all. This life of labour is to be crowned with a death of painfulness ; such is the way, with its narrow and strait gate, which even for a chief Apostle is the only one which leads to eternal life. The Lord would show him beforehand what great things he must suffer for his sake ; for this is often his manner with his elect servants, with an Ezekiel (iii. 25), with a Paul (Acts xxi. 11), and now with a Peter. “*When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.*” A prophetic allusion is here made to the crucifixion of Peter, St. John himself declaring that Jesus spake thus, “*signifying by what death he should glorify God*;” and no reasonable grounds exist for calling in question the tradition of the Church, that such was the manner of Peter’s martyrdom.‡ Doubtless it is here *obscurely* intimated ; but this is of the very nature of prophecy, and there is quite enough in the description to

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\* Wetstein : Oves istæ quo tempore Petro committebantur, crant adhuc teneri agni, novitii discipuli a Petro ex Judæis et gentibus adducendi. Quando vero etiam oves committit, significat eum ad senectutem victurum, et ecclesiam constitutam et ordinatam visurum esse.

† See Bernard, *De Consid.* ii. 8 ; and a curious letter of Pope Innocent (*Epp. ii. Ep. 209*) on the whole series of passages in Scripture, and this among the number, on which the claims of Romish supremacy rest: the series begins very early, namely with Gen. i. 16.

‡ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 25; iii. 1.

show that the Lord had this and no other manner of death in his eye. The stretched-forth hands are the hands extended upon either side on the transverse bar of the cross.\* The girding by another is the binding to the cross, the sufferer being not only fastened to the instrument of punishment with nails, but also bound to it with cords.† It cannot be meant by the bearing “*whither thou wouldest not*,” that there should be any reluctance on the part of Peter to glorify God by his death, except indeed the reluctance which there always is in the flesh to suffering and pain; a reluctance in his case, as in his Lord’s (cf. Matt. xxvi. 39), overruled by the higher willingness to do and to suffer the perfect will of God. In this sense, as it was a violent death,—a death which others chose for him,—a death from which flesh and blood would naturally shrink, it was a carrying “*whither he would not*;”‡

••• Theophylact: Τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἔκτασιν καὶ τὰ δεσμὰ δηλοῖ. The passages most to the point in showing that this would naturally be one of the images which one who, without naming, yet wished to indicate, crucifixion, would use, are this from Seneca (*Consol. ad Marciam*, 20): Video istic cruces non unius quidem generis; . . . . . alii brachia patibulo explicuerunt; and Tertullian (*De Pudic.* 22): In patibulo jam corpore expanso; who says again, with allusion to the stretching out of the hands in prayer: Paratus est ad omne supplicium ipse habitus orantis Christiani. And the following phrase occurs in Arrian, *Epiictetus*, iii. 26: ἐκτείνας σταυρὸν, ὡς οἱ ἐσταυρωμένοι. The passage adduced by some from Plautus—

Credo ego tibi esse eundum extra portam,  
Discessis manibus patibulum quum habebis—

is not quite satisfying; since this is most probably an allusion to the marching the criminal along, with his arms attached to the *fork* upon his neck, before he was himself fastened to the cross; or perhaps not to be followed up by actual execution at all, but only as itself an ignominious punishment (see Becker, *Gallus*, vol. i. p. 131; and Wetstein, in loc.).

† So Tertullian (*Scorp.* 15): Tunc Petrus ab altero cingitur, cum cruci astringitur; or perhaps it may be, as Lücke suggests, the girding the sufferer round the middle, who otherwise would be wholly naked on the cross. He quotes from the *Evang. Nivod.* 10: Ἐξέδυσαν οἱ στρατιῶται τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, καὶ περιέζωσαν αὐτὸν λεντίῳ.

‡ Chrysostom (*In Joh. Hom.* 88): “Οπον οὐ θέλεις τῆς φύσεως λέγει τὸ συμπαθὲς καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς τὴν ἀνάγκην, καὶ ὅτι ἄκοντα ἀπορρήγνυται τὸν σώματος ἡ ψυχή. Cf. Augustine’s beautiful words, *Serm. ccxcix.*

though, in a higher sense, as it was the way to a nearer vision of God, it was that toward which he had all his life been striving; and then he was borne whither most he would; and no word here implies that the exulting exclamation of another Apostle, at the near approach of his martyrdom (2 Tim. iv. 6-8), would not have suited his lips just as well.

The symbolical meaning which we have found in the earlier portions of the chapter must not be excluded from this. To "gird oneself" is ever in Scripture the sign and figure of promptness and an outward activity (Exod. xii. 11 ; Luke xii. 35 ; 1 Pet. i. 13 ; Ephes. vi. 14); so that, in fact, Christ is saying to Peter, "When thou wert young, thou *actedst* for Me; walking whither thou wouldest, thou wert free to work for Me, and to choose thy field of work; but when thou art old, thou shalt learn another, a higher and a harder lesson; thou shalt *suffer* for Me; thou shalt no more choose thy work, but others shall choose it for thee, and that work shall be the work of passion rather than of action." Such is the history of the Christian life, and not in Peter's case only, but such is its course and order in almost all of God's servants. It is begun in action, it is perfected in suffering. In the last, lessons are learned which the first could never teach; graces exercised, which else would not at all, or would only have very weakly, existed. Thus was it, for instance, with a John Baptist. He begins with Jerusalem and all Judea flowing to him to listen to his preaching; he ends with lying long, a seemingly forgotten captive, in the dungeon of Machærus. So was it with a St. Chrysostom. The chief cities of Asia and Europe, Antioch and Constantinople, wait upon him with reverence and homage while he is young, and he goes whither he would; but when he is old, he is borne whither he would not, up and down, a sick and suffering exile. Thus should it be also with this great Apostle. It was only in this manner that whatever of self-will and self-choosing survived in him

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and *Serm. clxxiii. 2*: *Quis enim vult mori? Prorsus nemo: et ita nemo ut beato Petro diceretur, Alter te cinget, et feret quo tu non vis.*

still, should be broken and abolished, that he should be brought into an entire emptiness of self, a perfect submission to the will of God.

He who has shown him the end, will also show him the way; for "*when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me.*" These words do more than merely signify in a general way, "*Be thou an imitator of Me.*" Such an explanation would show that we had altogether failed in realizing to ourselves this solemn scene, as it was on this day enacted on the shores of Gennesaret. That scene was quite as much in deed as in word; and here, at the very moment that the Lord spake the words, it would seem that He took some paces along the rough and rocky shore, bidding Peter to follow; thus setting forth to him in a figure his future life, which should be a following of his divine Master in the rude and rugged path of Christian action. All this was not so much spoken as done; for Peter, "*turning about,*"—looking, that is, behind him,—"*seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved*"—words not introduced idly, and as little so the allusion to his familiarity at the Paschal supper, but to explain the boldness of John in following unbidden;\* him he sees "*following,*" and thereupon inquires, "*Lord, and what shall this man do?*" He would know what his lot shall be, and what the issue of his earthly conversation. Shall he, too, follow by the same rugged path?

It is not very easy to determine the motive which moved this question, or the spirit in which it was asked: it was certainly something more than a mere natural curiosity. Augustine takes it as the question of one concerned that his friend should be left out, and not summoned to the honour of the same close following of his Lord with himself.† Others find

\* Bengel: Ut autem in cœnâ illâ ita nunc quoque locum quærebatur, et se familiariter insinuabat, propemodum magis, quam Petrus libenter perferret.

† Serm. cliii. 3: Quomodo ego sequor, et ipse non sequitur? This, too, is Chrysostom's explanation. Jerome's (*Adv. Jovin.* i. 26).

nothing so noble in it; that it is a question put more in the temper of Martha, when she asked the Lord, concerning Mary, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" (Luke x. 40), ill satisfied that Mary should remain quietly sitting at Jesus' feet, while she was engaged in laborious service for Him.\* It is certainly possible that Peter, understanding well what that "*Follow Me*" addressed to himself implied, may have felt a moment's jealousy at the easier lot assigned to John.

is slightly different: Nolens deserere Johannem, cum quo semper fuerat copulatus. In later times it was often understood, as that in Peter's words spoke out the jealousy of the practical life for the contemplative. The first thinks hardly of the other, counts it to be a shunning of the cross, a shrinking from earnest labour in the Lord's cause,—would fain have it also to be a martyr not merely in will, but in deed (see the very interesting extracts from the writings of the Abbot Joachim, in Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. p. 440).

\* It is partly no doubt their general character, as developed through the Gospel history, but mainly this passage, which has caused the two Apostles, St. Peter and St. John, to be accepted in the Church as the types, one of Christian action, the other of Christian contemplation; one, like the servants, *working* for its absent Lord; the other, like the virgins, *waiting* for Him: the office of the first, the active labouring for Christ, to cease and pass away, because the time would arrive when there should be no more need for it; but of the other, the contemplation of God, to remain (*μένειν*) till the Lord came, and not then to cease, but to continue for evermore. Thus Augustine in a noble passage, of which I can only give a fragment or two (*In Ev. Joh. tract. cxxiv.*): *Duas itaque vitas sibi divinitus prædictatas et commendatas novit Ecclesia, quarum est una in fide, altera in specie; una in tempore peregrinationis, altera in æternitate mansionis; una in labore, altera in requie; una in viâ, altera in patriâ; una in opere actionis, altera in mercede contemplationis; . . . una bona et mala discernit, altera quæ sola bona sunt, cernit: ergo una bona est, sed adhuc misera, altera melior et beata.* Ista significata est per Apostolum Petrum, illa per Johannem. *Tota hic agitur ista usque in hujus seculi finem, et illic invenit finem: differtur illa complenda posthujus seculi finem, sed in futuro seculo non habet finem.* Ideo dicitur huic, *Sequere me: de illo autem, Sic eum volo manere donec veniam, quid ad te? Tu me sequere. . . . Quod apertius ita dici potest, Perfecta me sequatur actio, informata meæ passionis exemplo; inchoata vero contemplatio maneat donec venio, perficienda cum venero.* All this remarkably came up again in the twelfth century in connexion with the *Evangelium æternum* (see the passage of Neander referred to in the note preceding).

But let it have been this jealousy, or that anxiety concerning the way in which the Lord would lead his fellow Apostle (and oftentimes we find it harder to commit those whom we love to his guiding than ourselves, and to cut off in regard of them all distrustful fears), it is plain that the source out of which the question proceeded was not altogether a pure one. There lies something of a check in the reply. These “times and seasons” it is not for him to know, nor to intermeddle with things which are the Lord’s alone. *He* claims to be the allotter of the several portions of his servants, and gives account of none of his matters: “*If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me.*” At the same time this, like so many of our Lord’s repulses, is not a mere répulse. Refusing to comply with an untimely request, it is yet never with a blank negation; and not seldom He gives even in the very act of seeming to deny; his Nay proving indeed a veiled Yea. So it was here. For assuredly the error of those brethren who drew from these words the conclusion, “*that that disciple should not die,*” did not ground itself in the mistaking what was intended as a mere hypothetical “*If I will,*” for a prophetical announcement. That “*If I will*” is no hypothetical case; Christ does not mean: “If I should choose that the laws of natural decay and death should be suspended in his case, and that thus he should live on till my return to judgment, this were nothing to thee.” Rather, even while He rebukes Peter for having asked the question, He does declare his pleasure that John should “*tarry*” till his coming; and this “*tarry*” we must not empty of its deeper meaning, which many, with the view of making all things easy here, have done—as though it meant, “*tarry*” in Galilee, or “*tarry*” in Jerusalem, while Peter was laboriously preaching the Gospel over all the world. To tarry can be taken in no other sense than that of to remain alive (cf. Phil. i. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 6; John xii. 34). But how could Christ thus announce that John should “*tarry*” till He came? Two answers have been given. Augustine, whom Grotius,

Lampe,\* and many moderns follow, understands “*till I come*” to signify, “till I take him away—till I summon him by an easy and natural death to myself.” But where then is the antithesis between his lot and Peter’s? However violent and painful the death of Peter may have been, yet did not the Lord in this sense “*come*” to him? does He not come to every faithful believer at the hour of his departure, be his death of what kind it may? Resolve this into common language, and it is in fact, “If I will that he live till he die, what is that to thee?” Some of our Lord’s sayings may appear slight, which yet are most deep; none seem deep, and yet on nearer inspection prove utterly slight and trivial, as this so interpreted would do. Rather let us explain these words by the help and in the light of Matt. xvi. 28. John should “*tarry*.” Among the twelve he was the only one who, according to that other and earlier announcement of his Lord, “should not taste of death, till he had seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” That great shaking, not of the earth only, but also of the heaven, that passing away of the old Jewish economy with a great noise, to make room for a new heaven and a new earth, this he should overlive, and see the Son of man, invisibly, yet most truly, coming to execute judgment on his foes. He only of the Twelve should overlive that mightiest catastrophe which the world has seen; and “*tarry*” far on into the glorious age which should succeed.

Nor was it this only; but his whole life and ministry in the Church should be in agreement with that its peaceful end. His should be a still work throughout; to deepen the inner life of the Church rather than to extend outwardly its borders. The rougher paths were not appointed for his treading; he should be perfected by another discipline. Martyr in will, but not in deed, he should crown a calm and honoured old

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\* Si nolo eum morte violentâ tolli quasi ante diem, sed manere in placidâ senectute superstitem usque dum veniam et morte naturali illum ad me recipiam, quid istud ad te?

age by a natural death. This, which Augustine and others made the primary meaning of the words, we may accept as a secondary and subordinate. It was not, indeed, that he, or any other saint, should escape his share of tribulation, or that the way for him, or for any, should be other than a strait and a narrow one (Rev. i. 9). Yet we see daily how the sufferings of different members of the kingdom are allotted in very different proportions; with some, they are comparatively few and far between, while for others, their whole life seems a constant falling from one trial to another.\*

He who records these words about himself notes, but notes only to refute, an expectation which had gotten abroad among the brethren, drawn from this saying inaccurately reported or wrongly understood, that he should never die; for, of course, if he had indeed "tarried" to the end of all, then mortality would in him have been swallowed up in life, and he would have passed into the heavenly kingdom without tasting death (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 17). And is there not something more than humility in the anxious earnestness with which he repels any such interpretation? No such mournful prerogative shall be his; not so long shall he be absent from his Lord: there lies no such sentence upon him of weary exclusion from that presence in which is fulness of joy. The Synagogue may have its "wandering Jew," who should never die; but this, not because there rests on him a peculiar blessing, but a peculiar curse. Yet this explicit declaration from the lips of John himself, that Jesus had said no such thing as that he should not die, did not effectually extinguish such a belief or superstition in the Church. We find traces of it surviving long; even his death and burial, which

\* See a sermon by St. Bernard (*In Nativ. SS. Innocent. I*): Et bibit ergo Johannes calicem salutaris, et secutus est Dominum, sicut Petrus, etsi non omni modo sicut Petrus. Quod enim sic mansit ut non etiam passione corporeâ Dominum sequeretur, divini fecit consilii; sicut ipse ait, Sic eum volo manere, donec veniam. Ac si dicat: Vult quidem et ipse sequi, sed ego sic eum volo manere.

men were compelled to acknowledge, were not sufficient to abolish it. For his death, some said, was only the appearance of death, and he yet breathed in his grave; so that even an Augustine was unable wholly to resist the reports which had reached him, that the earth yet heaved, and the dust was lightly stirred by the regular pulses of his breath.\* The fable of his still living, Augustine at once rejects; but is more patient with this report than one might have expected, counting it possible that a permanent miracle might be wrought at the Apostle's grave.†

\* *In Ev. Joh. tract. cxxiv.: Cum mortuus putaretur, sepultum fuisse dormientem, et donec Christus veniat sic manere, suamque vitam scaturigine pulvis indicare: qui pulvis creditur, ut ab imo ad superficiem tumuli ascendat, flatu quiescentis impelli. Huic opinioni supervacaneum existimo reluctari. Viderint enim qui locum sciunt, utrum hoc ibi faciat vel patiatur terra, quod dicitur; quia et revera non a levibus hominibus id audivimus.*

† See Tertullian, *De Anima*, 50; Hilary, *De Trinit.* vi. 39; Ambrose, *Exp. in Ps.* cxviii. *Serm.* xviii. 12; Jerome, *Adv. Jovin.* i. 26; Neander, *Kirch. Gesch.* vol. v. p. 1117. This superstition aided much the wide-spread faith of the Middle Ages in the existence of Prester John in further Asia. Even as late as the sixteenth century an impostor was burnt at Toulouse, who gave himself out as St. John; and in England some of the fanatical sects of the Commonwealth were looking for his return to revive and reform the Church.—The erroneous reading *Sic* [for *Si*] cum volo manere, which early found its way into the Latin copies, and which the Vulgate, with the obstinate persistence of the Romish Church in a once-admitted error, still retains, may have helped on the mistake concerning the meaning of Christ's words.

THE END.









